

**Unconfirmed Minutes of the 59th Annual General Meeting of the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust held at
10.30am on 30th September 2023 at All Nations Christian College, Easneye, Ware, SG12 8LX**

PRESENT

Members of Council

Chair-elect: Peter Tallantire
Vice-Chair: Veronica Edmonds-Brown
Treasurer-elect: Duncan Brown
Trustees: Olivia Bertham, Lisa Clavering, Keith Cotton, Lisa Foster, Laura Horton, Jackie Hunter, Kathryn Mackenzie, Patrick Schneiders, Peter Tallantire, Louise Turner, Stephanie Woods

Officers

President: Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon
Vice-President: Robert Wilson

Members

Derek Angell, Jacqueline Angell, Kate Aylett, Liam Barrett, Vicky Barrett, Agneta Burton, David Carrier, Margaret Carrier, Christine Carter, Brian Combridge, Jennie Davies, Loyd Davies, John Davis, Stuart Marcylan Denholm, Ian Edwards, Kehinde Etti, Clive Fleming, Helen Fleming, Jane Free, Gillian Goddard, Kenneth Golding, Frank Barrie Goldsmith, Dorothy Hayward, Martin Hillis, Jennifer Hopping, Anna Husband, Robert Husband, Gordon Imroth, Graham Jones, Paul Knutson, Sarah Kohl, Janet Mitchell, Alison Monckton, Connie Nall, Janice Neal, David Neal, Humphrey Norrington, Sue Pike, Nicholas Pike, Marcella Randell, John Rank, Margaret Rank, Claire Robinson, Everall Roly, John Rowley, Raglan Sanders, Valerie Schicker-Hill, David Seabrook, Rose Seabrook, John Silvertown, Barbara Sohi, Helen Stamp, Ann Stephens-Jones, Catherine Sullivan, Catherine Walker, Chris Weeresinghe, Peter Wilkinson, Nic Wilson, Jane Young.

Members of Staff

Chief Executive: Lesley Davies

Debbie Bigg, Heidi Carruthers, Charlie Cooke, Chloe Edwards, Lea Ellis, Petra Green, Tim Hill, Josh Kalms, Vicki Loberman, Jonathan Mortlock, Emma Norrington, Sarah Perry, Rachel Rogers, Sarah Rutherford, Steven Werrell.

APOLOGIES

Officers

President Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon

Members of Council

Chair: Michael Master
Treasurer: Clive Hinds

Members

Alan Bradley, Caroline Downer-Smith, Douglas Downer-Smith, Barrie Goldsmith, Clare Gooden, Malcolm Hull, Ray Jackson, Jan Kitchin, Stuart Marcy, Tony Marsh, Patricia McKay, Richard McKay, Glenys Parry, Sarah Reynolds, James Ridings, Neil Roberts, Jocelyn Roberts, Neelam Sharma, Michael Stewart, Angela Thurstan, Andrew Urquhart, Anne Walkington, Rebecca Watts, David White.

Members of Staff

Lise Ashton, Emily Baker, Laura Baker, Jo Bayford, Astrid Biddle, Alice Bradley, Matt Butters, Jo Calcutt, Ian Carle, Charlotte Caro, Sally Clark, Helene Commandeur, Alan Cotterell, Sarah Croft, Anna Daniels, Matt Dodds, Kathryn Dunnett, Rose Gibson, Chloé Harmsworth, Hayley Lewis, Marianne Lodge, Heather MacIntosh, Jess Pinches, Anne Rowe, Ellie Smith, Esme Staunton Howe, Andy Taylor, Nicola Thompson, Dan Townsend, Justin Tyas, Becky Vernon-Clinch, Alex Waechter, Jo Whitaker, Fiona Wistow, Michael Wood, Carys Worsdale.

WELCOME

The Chief Executive welcomed members to the AGM, and delivered the health and safety, and administrative rules.

INTRODUCTION

The Vice-Chair, Veronica Edmonds-Brown, introduced herself, and Chief Executive Lesley Davies, and Facilities Manager Charlie Cooke, who took the Minutes.

It was noted throughout that 7 proxy votes had been received in advance of the AGM.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
The Vice-Chair asked whether any apologies for absence had been received. It was agreed that the list of the apologies would be included in the Minutes. The Vice-Chair noted that Mike Master and Clive, who are stepping down from the Board, were both unable to attend the AGM, and thanked them for their service to the Trust.	Agreed
NOTICE OF MEETING The Vice-Chair asked that the Notice of Meeting be taken as read.	Agreed
2. MINUTES OF THE 58th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TRUST HELD ON 17th SEPTEMBER 2022	
The Minutes were available from the Trust's head office and on the Trust's website in advance of the meeting, and some copies were available at the meeting. The Vice-Chair asked if these were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. <i>Proposed: Sarah Kohl, seconded Jackie Hunter and the correct record of minutes were unopposed.</i> The Minutes were signed and dated by the Vice-Chair.	Resolution carried
3. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	
There were no matters arising from the Minutes.	Agreed

4. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2022/2023

The Annual Review was available from the Trust’s head office and on the Trust’s website in advance of the meeting, and some copies were available at the meeting.

The Chief Executive outlined the key achievements during the year. This featured how the Trust is delivering its strategic aims through our nature reserves and wider countryside work including rivers and the water vole project, and through our engagement and communications. The Chief Executive spoke about the Trust’s new nature reserves, Astonbury Wood and Archers Green and thanked everyone who had supported the fundraising appeals. The Chief Executive spoke about the Trust’s work with farmers and the importance this plays with nature’s recovery at a landscape scale and highlighted the importance of the Local Wildlife Sites programme. The importance of the Herts Environmental Records Centre was highlighted as was the planning and advocacy work of the Trust to stand up for wildlife. The Chief Executive concluded by thanking the Trust’s volunteers, staff and members, and sharing good news stories about species recovery.

The Vice-Chair asked for a proposer and seconder for the resolution that the Annual Review be accepted.

Proposed: Kenneth Golding, seconded Robert Wilson and the Annual Review was unopposed.

Resolution carried

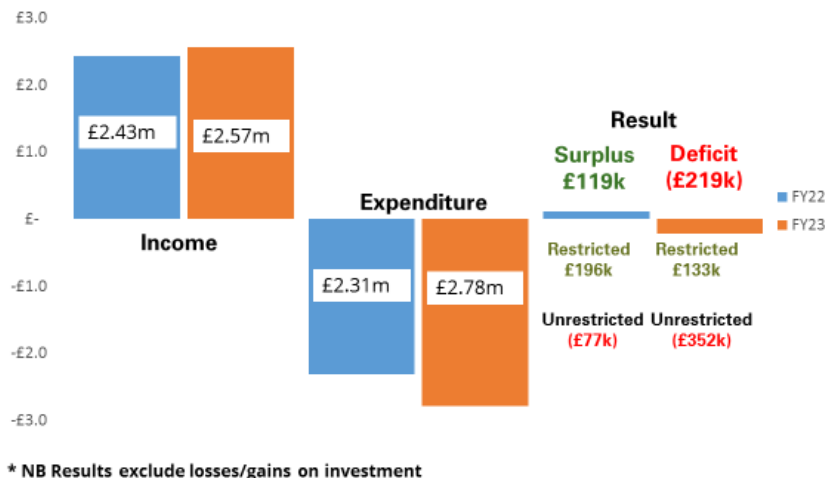
5. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

Peter Tallantire, as a member of the Trust’s Finance & Audit Committee, presented the audited accounts.

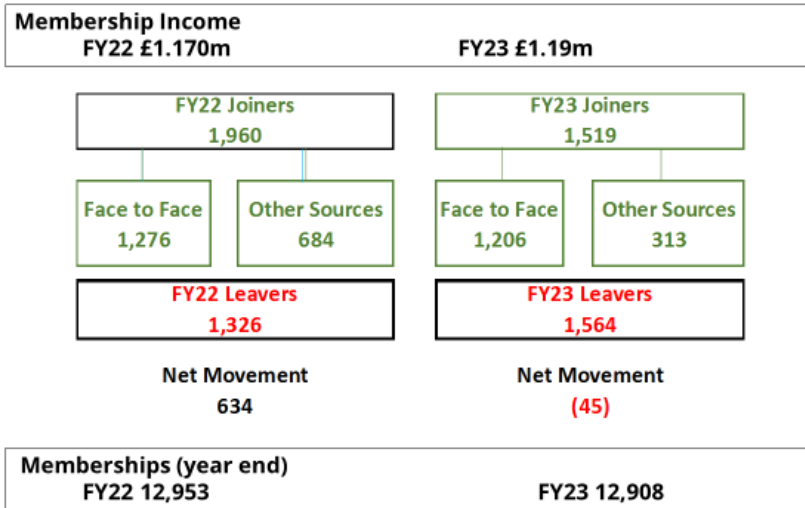
Copies of the full financial statements were available from the Trust’s head office and on the Trust’s website in advance of the meeting, and some copies were available at the meeting.

In making the presentation, Peter Tallantire explained the charts in the powerpoint presentation:

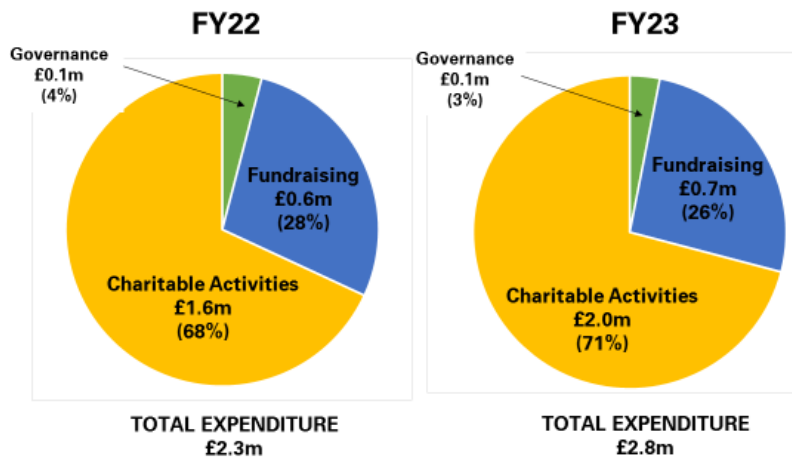
1. FY23 Overall result



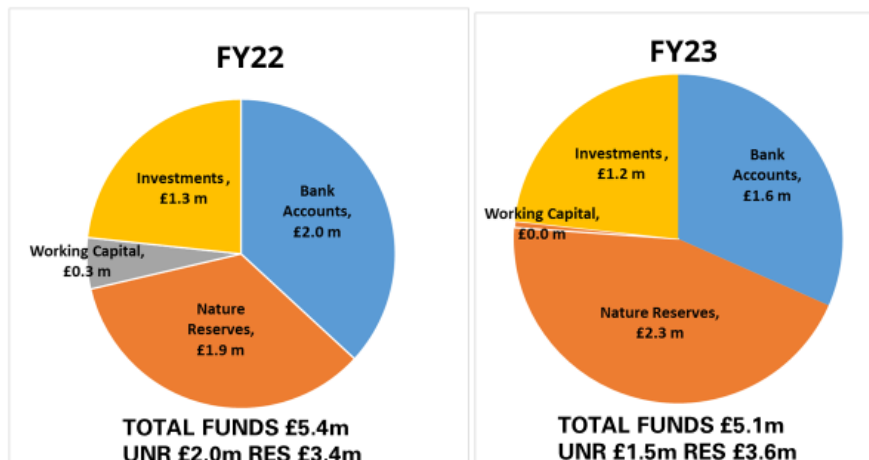
2. FY23 Membership recruitment



3. FY23 Expenditure analysis



4. FY23 Financial position



The Vice-Chair invited the adoption of the audited accounts.

Proposed: Kathryn MacKenzie, seconded Kenneth Golding and the resolution to adopt the audited accounts was unopposed.

Resolution carried

A number of questions were asked following the presentation of the annual review and the accounts, which were responded to by the Chair and Chief Executive.

A member queried the delayed legacy mentioned in the report. The Chair explained there were complications in the process and that the Trust was still awaiting confirmation of the detail.

The Chair was thanked by a member for the clear financial statements and asked how the Trust works to keep members who have signed up. The CE discussed the various events and communications with new members to ensure they feel part of the Trust and see the difference their support is helping to make.

Another member asked if the Trust asks members their reasons for leaving. The CE discussed how most leavers provide a reason and we do try to find out if none provided, as this information is very important to us to understand any issues or patterns.

The low working capital level was queried shown in the graphs presented for FY23. The Chair explained there was a reasonable sum of money in the Trust accounts and the figure was not representative due to being rounded. It was noted that this was more about presentation of the figures.

A life member asked how we place a monetary value on nature reserves; the Chair stated the value is equated to the cost the Trust paid for them.

A member asked how we decide on what we do on each reserve. The CE explained the process of preparing a management plan and that monitoring of the condition of the sites is important, that we need to secure funding such as grant aid, along with practical issues such as the availability of livestock.

6. RE-ELECTION, RETIREMENT & ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL & COMPANY OFFICERS

<p>a) The Vice-Chair informed the meeting that Peter Tallantire and Kathryn Mackenzie were standing for re-election for a second term.</p> <p>Proposed: Robert Wilson, seconded Paul Knutson, and it was unopposed that the above should be re-elected as Members of Council.</p> <p>b) The Vice-Chair informed the meeting that Michael Master, Clive Hinds and Keith Cotton were retiring this year.</p> <p>c) The Vice-Chair informed the meeting that, with Michael Master having retired from the board as Chair, Peter Tallantire was seeking to be elected as Chair of the Trust.</p> <p>Proposed: Keith Cotton, seconded Agneta Burton, and it was unopposed that Peter Tallantire be elected as Chair.</p> <p>d) The Chair informed the meeting that Veronica Edmonds-Brown was willing to be re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Trust for a further year.</p> <p>Proposed: Robert Wilson, seconded Kathryn MacKenzie, and it was unopposed that Veronica Edmonds-Brown be re-elected as Vice-Chair for a further year.</p> <p>e) The Chair informed the meeting that Duncan Brown, Lisa Foster, Patrick Schneiders and Stephanie Woods were standing for election as Members of Council.</p> <p>Proposed: Louise Turner, seconded Lisa Clavering, and it was unopposed that the above should be elected as Members of Council.</p> <p>f) The Chair informed the meeting that, with Clive Hinds having retired from the board as Treasurer, Duncan Brown was seeking to be elected as Treasurer of the Trust.</p> <p>Proposed: Kathryn MacKenzie, seconded Olivia Bertham, and it was unopposed that Duncan Brown be elected as Treasurer.</p> <p>g) The Chair informed the meeting that Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon and Robert Wilson were willing to continue as President and Vice-President of the Trust respectively for a further year.</p> <p>Proposed: Peter Tallantire, seconded Lisa Clavering, and it was unopposed that Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon continue as President and Robert Wilson continue as Vice-President for a further year.</p> <p>h) The Chair informed the meeting that Michael Master has agreed to be appointed as one of the Trust's Vice-Presidents.</p> <p>Proposed: Robert Wilson, seconded Jan Mitchell, and it was unopposed that Michael Master be elected as Vice-President.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p> <p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>7. TO CONFIRM THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF MERCER AND HOLE AS AUDITORS AND TO AUTHORISE COUNCIL TO AGREE THEIR REMUNERATION</p>	

<p>Members were invited to confirm the re-appointment of Mercer and Hole as auditors for the 2023/2024 financial year and authorise Council to agree their remuneration.</p> <p><i>Proposed: Kenneth Golding, seconded Kathryn MacKenzie and the resolution to confirm the re-appointment of Mercer and Hole as auditors for the 2023/2024 financial year was unopposed.</i></p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>8. THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS</p>	
<p>The Chair took time to thank all our supporters, in particular our members and supporters. The Chair mentioned three nature reserve wardens who had retired during the year, Dr Nick Murray, Neale Holmes Smith and Barrie Stockwell and recognised their help, support and passion for the reserves. The Chair also remember a number of supporters who died during the year and offered the Trust's sincere condolences to all their family and friends. This included long term volunteers Roy Thornley, Nigel Agar, Brian Parkhouse and Ernest Leahy, as well as John Gardner, a councillor in Stevenage and a great supporter of the Trust and champion for wildlife.</p> <p>The Chair expressed the Trust's gratitude to our members who choose to remember us in their will and gifts in memory, and how these kind donations have enabled us to continue the work we do to support wildlife in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.</p>	
<p>9. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE OF THE AGM</p>	
<p>Mr Golding submitted a question in advance to which the Chief Executive provided a response. Mr Golding asked: <i>Last year you stated "Now that we have replacement staff in post, we will be reviewing all of our events programme for 2023, including Apple Day, and looking at matters such as practical logistics and how events can best deliver our aims." What exactly are you 'aims'? Events such as Apple Day & The Festival of Wildlife attracted great attendances and created much publicity for the Trust, but nothing like this now appears to be happening.</i></p> <p>The Chief Executive provided a response to Mr Golding and explained that the Trust's strategy sets out three interconnected goals –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More land is managed and protected for nature 2. More people are standing up for wildlife and taking action for nature's recovery 3. Nature plays a central and valued role in helping to address climate issues and people's health and wellbeing <p>The CE explained that the events programme is central to this strategy and delivers on all three goals, for instance by helping people to understand about the importance of protecting wildlife and wild places, by inspiring people to take action for wildlife, and through our volunteering programme where people get the chance not only to help wildlife but to be involved in activities which benefit their physical and mental health.</p> <p>The aims for our events programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the most impact possible, which means engaging with a wide diversity of people and shaping our events so that they inspire and encourage action. • Not only do we want people to enjoy their time at the event – which is important in its own right – but we want to see a long-lasting impact, for instance our participants supporting the Trust as a member or volunteer, standing up for wildlife by writing to their MPs, or putting a wildlife pond in their garden. • The events are a good way of getting our members involved, including as a way of welcoming new members. • We aim to use our events to broaden the reach of the Trust to new audiences and achieve our aims around equality, diversity and inclusion, for instance by working in new areas, with new community organisations and making our events as accessible and communications as possible 	

The CE explained that in designing our events programme we take into account how to have the most impact and get best value for staff time and costs, how to reduce risk (such as the effect of adverse weather), how to reach the most people and how to make our events as accessible as possible for the participants.

The CE explained that we ran hundreds of events in the last year including Life at the Lake at Hilfield Park Reservoir, 65 events for the Queens Green Canopy Woodland planting at Panshanger Park plus a walks programme, and Wildfest which was held in Verulamium Park in attracted over 2000 people. The CE highlighted our new Next Door Nature programme which started in 2022 through which the team are organising events for the public and community organisations.

The CE explained that this was just a summary of the type of events organized by the Trust and how we seek to achieve our aims, and said she was happy to speak separately to Mr Golding about this.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair concluded by saying a special thank you to the three Trustees had stepped down at the AGM, Mike Master, Clive Hinds and Keith Cotton. Regrettably, neither Clive Hinds nor Mike Master were able to join us today.

The Chair explained that Mike joined as a Trustee and became Chair in 2009 having played a leading role in the Trust acquiring Amwell Nature Reserve. He has led the Board and been a huge support for the staff team throughout this time. Mike extended his term as Chair in order to help see us through the challenging times of the pandemic. Mike is very well connected and has used this to help us build partnerships with businesses, to speak with local and national politicians, and to encourage people to support the Trust as members and volunteers. The Chair expressed how pleased he was that Mike has agreed to become one of our Vice Presidents and in so doing will continue his involvement with the Trust.

The Chair explained that Clive joined as a Trustee in 2011 and two years later became our Honorary Treasurer. He has been a huge source of support and guidance, in particular for our finance team. We have benefitted greatly from Clive's professional expertise and he has played a leading role in ensuring that the Trust looks ahead to ensure we are financially sustainable.

The Chair expressed gratitude to Keith who has served as a Trustee for 9 years. Keith has been instrumental in helping to develop our approach to communications and to engagement, and has been a member of the Engagement Committee. The Chair took the opportunity to wish Keith all the very best.

The Chair concluded the AGM by thanking all for coming, thanking staff, volunteers, Members of Council, and the Trust's members and supporters, particularly all those present at the meeting.