

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
(Charity No. 239863 / Company No. 816710)

**Unconfirmed Minutes of the 56th Annual General Meeting of the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust held at 10.00am
on 19th September 2020 held virtually on Demio due to the Covid-19 pandemic**

PRESENT

Members of Council

Chairman	Mike Master
Treasurer	Clive Hinds
Trustee	Olivia Bertham, Keith Cotton, Jackie Hunter, Amy Jankiewicz, Paul Knutson, Sarah Kohl, Kathryn MacKenzie, Peter Tallantire, Andrew Woods

Members

Agneta Burton, Andrew Clark, Mary Dixon, Ken Golding, Charlotte Hawkins, David Johnson, Mike Mackenzie, David Neal, Janice Neal, Jill Pearce, S Pearce, John Rowley, Joy Rowley, Carol Stokes, Harold Stokes, John Telford, Angela Thurston

Members of Staff

Chief Executive	Lesley Davies
Business Support Manager	Becky Vernon-Clinch
Head of Fundraising & Communications	Emma Norrington
Events & Marketing Officer	Emma Matthars
Finance Manager	Sally Clark

APOLOGIES

Members of Council

Vice Chairman	Veronica Edmonds-Brown
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Officers

President	Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon
Vice-President	Robert Wilson

Members

Linda Ascroft, Nyra Banks, Alan Bea, Wendy Benatar, Sallyann Boschette, Geraldine Cox, Maja Czerkas, John Davis, Stuart Downhill, Sonia Field, Winifred Goldfinch, Dorothy Hayward, Carol Howard, Moira Hunt, Peter Hunt, Jennifer Jones, John Kirby, Carl Kurstew, Wendy Lee, Ian MacDonald, John Mair, Alfred Moon, Mike Parr, Michael Peterson, M E Philpott, Mrs Reid, Mr Reid, Jill Saunders, Susan Stokes, F Taylor, E Taylor, Richard Walduck, Susan Walduck, Lyn Walker, Pat Williams

Members of Staff

As the meeting was held on line, no other members of staff were expected to attend.

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed members to the AGM and introduced himself, Chief Executive Lesley Davies, Treasurer Clive Hinds and Business Support Manager Becky Vernon-Clinch, who took the Minutes. The Chairman explained that, due to COVID-19 the AGM was being held online, and that we hope to be able to hold a Members' Day in the Spring. The Chairman provided guidance on voting and explained that questions will not be taken during the event.

It was noted throughout that 29 proxy votes had been received in advance of the AGM.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
The Chairman asked whether any apologies for absence had been received. It was agreed that the list of the apologies would be included in the Minutes.	Agreed
NOTICE OF MEETING The Chairman asked that the Notice of Meeting be taken as read.	Agreed
2. MINUTES OF THE 55th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TRUST HELD ON 14TH SEPTEMBER 2019	
The Minutes were available from the Trust's head office and online in advance of the meeting. They were also available as a handout to download. The Chairman asked if these were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. Proposed: Sarah Kohl, seconded Keith Cotton and the correct record of minutes were unopposed. The Minutes were electronically signed and dated by the Chairman.	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 2019/2020	
The Annual Review was available from the Trust's head office and online in advance of the meeting. It was also available as a handout to download. The Chief Executive began by welcoming all the members joining the meeting, thanking them for their support. The CE went on to say a few words about the last year. This included recognition of the vital role that members play in the financial support for the Trust as well as the collective voice for wildlife. The CE highlighted how important volunteers are to the Trust and the difference they make across numerous activities. The CE also took the opportunity to thank the staff team for their commitment and hard work and in particular noted the additional challenges the staff team had been dealing with since the COVID-19 situation began. The CE highlighted just some of the many wildlife highlights during the last year and underlined that the ecological crisis continues and that the Trust's role in giving wildlife a future, and the support of our members, is as important as ever. The CE explained that the COVID-19 situation had clearly had a major impact on the Trust and that some activities are now recommencing such as nature reserve volunteers, but underlined that the Trust will continue to follow government guidance. The CE thanked the members for their generosity to the Trust's COVID-19 recovery appeal and for all the messages of support. The CE finished by reiterating her thanks to all our members. The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder for the resolution that the Annual Review be accepted. Proposed: Peter Tallantire, seconded Andrew Woods and the Annual Review was unopposed.	Resolution carried
5. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2020	
The Treasurer informed everyone that copies of the full financial statements were available on the Trust's website in advance of the meeting, and a link was available at the meeting. The Treasurer passed on his huge thanks and gratitude to the Trust's finance team on successfully closing the year-end accounts at the height of the COVID-19 lockdown. The Treasurer underlined the severe impact that COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, on our recruitment of new members to the Trust and our income from that year on year.	

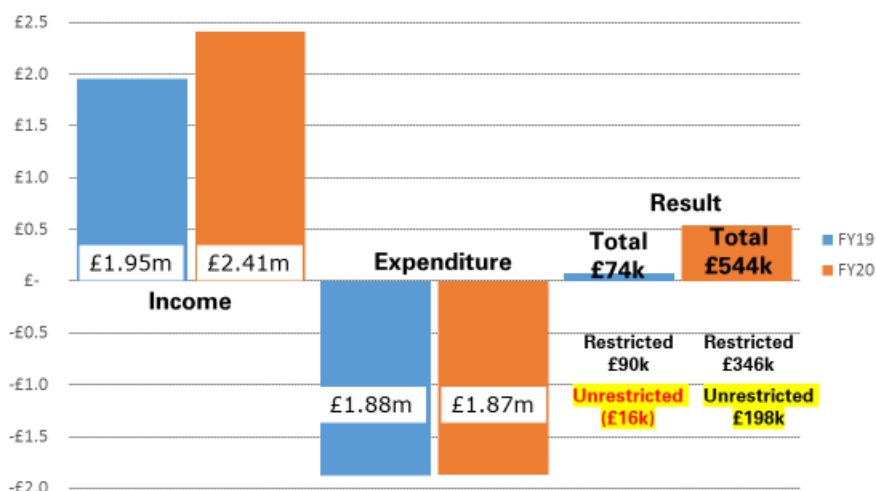
In making the presentation, the Treasurer explained the charts in the PowerPoint presentation:

1. Impact of CV19 on current year ending March 21 (FY21)



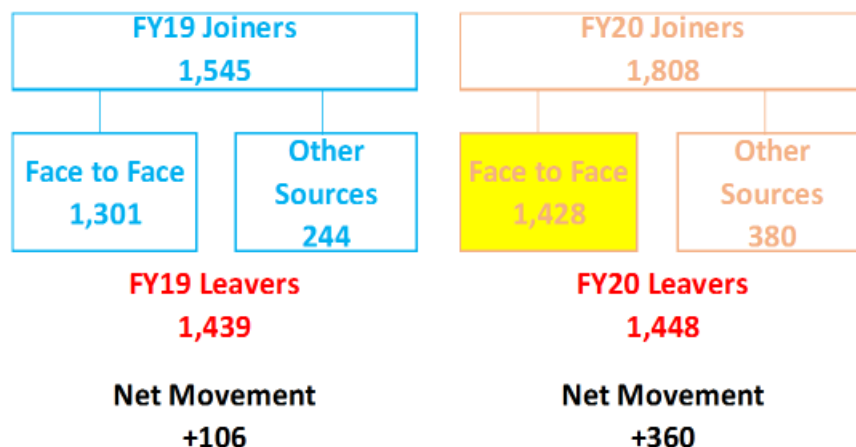
- **Costs**- increased due to vandalism and litter on nature reserves
- **Membership Recruitment:**
 - all Face to Face recruitment suspended at the start of lockdown and recruiters furloughed (*estimated loss £120k*).
 - F2F activity recommenced in July; some recovery although access to events and private sites limited.
 - Members leaving have been lower than feared.
 - Significant cumulative financial impact in coming years due to number of members recruited so much lower in FY21.
- **Fundraising:** - all F2F events cancelled (*estimated loss £60k*). Online alternatives introduced.
- **Covid Appeal:** - donations *£54k* from 856 donors.
- **Grants:** - Heritage Emergency Lottery fund grant obtained to cover one off costs and working practice changes required to reduce Covid risks.

2. Year Ending 31st March 20 (FY20) Overall result



* NB Results exclude losses/gains on investment

3. FY20 Membership recruitment



The Chairman invited the adoption of the audited accounts.

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

Resolution carried

6. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

a) The Chairman informed the meeting that **Andrew Woods** was retiring this year. He offered his thanks on behalf of the Trust for all his work.

The Chairman informed the meeting that **Keith Cotton** was standing for re-election for a third term.

The Chairman informed the meeting that **Veronica Edmonds-Brown** was retiring by rotation in accordance with the Articles of Association, and standing for re-election.

Proposed: Sarah Kohl, seconded Olivia Bertham, and it was unopposed that the above should be re-elected as Members of Council.

Resolution carried

b) The Chairman informed the meeting that **Kathryn MacKenzie** and **Peter Tallantire** were standing for election as Members of Council, having been co-opted by Members of Council in November and February respectively.

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder for the resolution to approve the election of Kathryn MacKenzie.

Proposed: Jackie Hunter, seconded Andrew Woods, and it was unopposed that Kathryn MacKenzie should be elected as a Member of Council.

Resolution carried

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder for the resolution to approve the election of Peter Tallantire.

<p>Proposed: Sarah Kohl, seconded Olivia Bertham, and it was unopposed that Peter Tallantire should be elected as a Member of Council.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS</p>	
<p>a) The Chief Executive informed the meeting that Mike Master was willing to be re-elected as Chairman of the Trust for a further year.</p>	
<p>Proposed: Jackie Hunter, seconded Ken Goldring, and it was unopposed that Mike Master continue as Chairman.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>b) The Chairman informed the meeting that Veronica Edmonds-Brown was willing to be re-elected as Vice Chairman of the Trust for a further year.</p>	
<p>Proposed: Kathryn MacKenzie, seconded Peter Tallantire, and it was unopposed that Ronni Edmonds-Brown continue as Vice-Chairman.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>c) The Chairman informed the meeting that Clive Hinds was willing to be re-elected as Treasurer of the Trust for a further year.</p>	
<p>Proposed: Mike Master, seconded Jackie Hunter, and it was unopposed that Clive Hinds continue as Treasurer.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>d) The Chairman informed the meeting that Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon was willing to continue as President of the Trust for a further year.</p>	
<p>Proposed: Mike Master, seconded Keith Cotton, and it was unopposed that Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon continue as President.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>e) The Chairman informed the meeting that Robert Wilson was willing to continue as Vice President of the Trust for a further year.</p>	
<p>Proposed: Jackie Hunter, seconded Peter Tallantire, and it was unopposed that Robert Wilson continue as Vice President.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>8. TO CONFIRM THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF MAZARS LLP AS AUDITORS AND TO AUTHORISE COUNCIL TO AGREE THEIR REMUNERATION</p>	
<p>Mazars carried out the audit for the 2019/20 financial year. Management and Trustees are satisfied with their work and the Finance & Resources Committee met virtually with Mazars on 11th June to review the accounts which were then approved by Council on 18th June. Members were invited to confirm the appointment of Mazars as auditors for the 2020/21 financial year and authorise Council to agree their remuneration.</p>	
<p>Proposed: Ken Golding, seconded Kathryn MacKenzie, and it was unopposed that Mazars be re-appointed as auditors for a further year and that Council should agree their remuneration.</p>	<p>Resolution carried</p>
<p>9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p>	
<p>a) The Chairman informed the meeting of the deaths of some of our supporters.</p> <p>It is with great sadness that this year we said goodbye to two passionate and dedicated naturalists.</p> <p>Paul Thrush was Reserves Officer and later Nature Reserves Manager at the Trust from 2007-2016. Paul's enthusiasm for wildlife was infectious and many of our members will remember Paul from his fantastic guided walks and Trust events. One of the Trust reserves under Paul's care was Aldbury Nowers and he was instrumental in turning the reserve into the precious wildlife haven it is today.</p>	

Trevor James was Hertfordshire's long-time recorder for flora and beetles, and made a remarkable contribution to the study, understanding and recording of wildlife in the county. His landmark achievements are two exceptional books: Flora of Hertfordshire and Beetles of Hertfordshire. Trevor was a revered organiser of the Herts branch of the British Naturalists Association and he also served on the Herts Natural History Society management committee and was a former Chair. This year he was given the British Empire Medal for services to nature conservation in Hertfordshire.

We also remember Brenda Barratt who passed away at the end of last year. Brenda had been a supporter of the Trust for many years, from 1999-2016, providing invaluable advice and guidance as Company Secretary and as a member of our Health & Safety Committee.

We offer our condolences to all their families and friends.

b) The Trust received a question from Neale Holmes-Smith in advance of the meeting. The CE provided a verbal response at the AGM.

Mr Holmes-Smith asked whether the Trustees and staff are aware of the considerable decline in the integrity of some of our wetland reserves and in particular Stanborough Reedbed, Tewinbury and Lemsford Springs where Mr Holmes-Smith has been regularly volunteering over the last 30 years. Mr Holmes-Smith has particular concerns about the drying out of Stanborough Reedbed, the impact of Himalayan Balsam at Tewinbury and the invasive grasses and sedges and the decline of the watercress at Lemsford Springs.

The CE started by acknowledging the vital role that Mr Holmes-Smith has played as warden and volunteer over many years at these three nature reserves, working alongside his fellow voluntary wardens Robin Cole and Barry Trevis, and that the Trust values and appreciates their long-standing knowledge of these reserves and their wildlife.

The CE explained that the Trust is concerned about any decline in the quality of our reserves and that we monitor changes in their wildlife. The CE explained that we are very aware that water level or flow changes due to climate change are significant issues across a large number of our other sites as well, either wetlands or wet features on drier sites, and have collated a list of sites where we have identified these issues and we are planning further investigations, including hydrological surveys, to see how we can best tackle the problems and adapt our management accordingly.

The CE explained that Tom Day, Head of Living Landscapes and Laura Baker, Nature Reserves Manager are meeting with Mr Holmes-Smith, Mr Cole and Mr Trevis to discuss the nature reserves and together they will be looking at next steps required to understand the reasons behind the changes, and to identify whether the management of the nature reserves needs to be adapted.

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

The Chairman closed the formal meeting at 10.35am

The meeting was finished with a short video to celebrate the purchase of the Trust's new nature reserve, Beane Marsh.