

Minutes of 62nd Annual General Meeting

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Monday 5th December 2023 – 11 am – 12.20pm

Brooklands Farm

<u>In Attendance</u>		<u>Apologies</u>
Mark Kibblewhite (Chair) (MK) Anne Wheatcroft (AW) Giles Pugh (GP) Jim White (JW) Jo Davies (JD) John Gaye (JG) Nigel Webb (NW) Roger Cole (RC) Tony Bates (TB) Gail Ninnim (GN) Simon Goldsack (SG) Sam Taylor (STa) John McDavid (JM)	Brian Bleese (BB) Andrew Pollard (AP) Imogen Davenport (ID) John Stobart (JS) Isla Reynolds (IR) Steve Davis (SD) Les Bunce (LB) Leo Henley-Lock (LHL) Lisbet Sherlock (LS) Ian Alexander (IA) Joanna Evans (JE)- minutes	Sara Thompson (ST) Sue Patterson (SP) Jeremy Powne (JP) Sarah Pritchard (SP)

<u>Minutes of Annual General Meeting</u>	
<p>The Chair of Trustees, Mark Kibblewhite, welcomed those in attendance at the 62nd annual meeting of the Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT).</p>	
1.	<p><u>Apologies</u> Noted and accepted, listed above.</p>
2.	<p><u>Declarations of interest</u> None</p>
3.	<p><u>Approval of the minutes of the last AGM</u> The minutes of the 61st AGM held on 5th December 2022 were approved. Proposed by Isla Reynolds, seconded by Tony Bates and accepted <i>nem.con</i>.</p>
4.	<p><u>Commentary on Financial Statements</u> The Management Accountant (STa) presented the consolidated results and balance sheet for DWT and its trading subsidiary for the year ended 31 March 2023, which were approved by the Trustees at the 338th Council meeting on 4th September 2023.</p> <p><i>DWT had an overall surplus for the year ending 31 March 2023 of £0.8m, compared to a surplus of £4.07m in the previous year. It was explained that the prior year figure had been skewed by the inclusion of a £3.12 million restricted capital grants for the acquisition of land at Wild Woodbury. Income levels in most areas have returned to pre-pandemic levels, as has expenditure as activities have resumed.</i></p>

	<p><i>DWT budgeting is a complex process and includes planned drawdowns of both restricted funds for projects and from our free reserves, but only to the extent that level of free reserves remains within the parameters of our free reserves policy. It was confirmed that free reserves as at 31 March 2023 represented approximately 6 months of total budgeted annual costs, in line with our policy statement that meets Charity Commission requirements.</i></p> <p><i>DWT ended the year with net current assets of £1.9m.</i></p> <p>There were no questions from attendees. MK thanked ST for an excellent delivery, and for stepping in to take on the presentation of accounts as short notice.</p>
5.	<p><u>Resolutions</u></p> <p>Special Resolution</p> <p>1. THAT the annual audited accounts and reports for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 be received. Proposed by Simon Goldsack, seconded by John McDavid and accepted <i>nem.con</i>.</p> <p>Special Resolution</p> <p>2. THAT the auditors Moore South LLP be appointed for the coming year. Proposed by Giles Pugh, seconded by Anne Wheatcroft and accepted <i>nem.con</i></p> <p>Ordinary Resolution</p> <p>3. To authorize the remuneration of the auditors. Proposed by Roger Cole, seconded by Giles Pugh and accepted <i>nem.con</i>.</p> <p>Ordinary Resolution</p> <p>4. THAT those persons retained as trustees for a further year, as selected by the Chair are duly elected and appointed for the additional term to take effect from the end of the AGM:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a. Jo Davies. Proposed by Mark Kibblewhite, seconded by Gail Ninnim and accepted <i>nem.con</i>.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">b. Anne Wheatcroft. Proposed by Mark Kibblewhite, seconded by Jo Davies and accepted <i>nem.con</i>.</p> <p>5. THAT those persons standing for election as trustees, Leo Henley-Lock, Lisbet Sherlock and Ian Stanley are duly elected and appointed, to take effect from the end of the AGM. Proposed by Mark Kibblewhite, seconded by Gail Ninnim and accepted <i>nem.con</i>.</p> <p>6. The following trustees stood down, and were thanked for their service:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a. Kelvyn Derrick</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">b. Nigel Webb</p> <p>MK thanked all the trustees who gave up their time to support DWT.</p>
6.	<p><u>Dorset Wildlife Trust: Review of the last year - Brian Bleese, Chief Executive</u></p> <p>BB thanked members for attending and encouraged them to talk to the staff and to see the work being carried out. He thanked the trustees and staff for their support over the past few challenging years.</p>

BB opened by reminding everyone of the agreed mission of Dorset Wildlife Trust:

Create a Wilder Dorset - a Dorset rich in wildlife, valued and nurtured by everyone will help safeguard our natural world for future generations and enable people to live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Our greatest challenges haven't changed, although progress is being made

1. Nature's recovery - creating a wilder Dorset with 30% of land and seas managed for nature by 2030
2. Standing up for Nature
3. Reconnecting people and Nature - 1 in 4 people taking action for Nature by 2030.

We are committed to increasing DWT landholding by 50% by 2030. Our baseline of landholdings was 1295ha. By the end of 2023 there has been an increase of 227ha (17.5%). By the end of 2024 we have an expected increase of 626ha (48.3%).

We have made significant progress in our engagement work, with the Fine Foundation Lookout on Brownsea Island taking shape, and new interpretation and signage with the new logo being sited across our reserves. Access work at Wild Woodbury continues, and the recently laid paths have been welcome additions to the site.

Many of the outstanding marine areas around Dorset are designated Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), potentially contributing to the 30% by 2030 target. DWT plays an important role in surveying and monitoring species diversity, abundance and locations within MPAs to contribute to knowledge of MPAs and effective decision-making. We have helped re-establish the Durlston Dolphin Watching Group this year. Our seabed condition monitoring programme enables us to not only see changes to the seabed, but we are also able to map climate change impact on species.

Major new initiatives that we are progressing include:

Species recovery project (£160k secured) - 10 species across 11 nature reserves
 Climate Peatland Initiative - £1m (secured) involving 172ha of land and 7 partner organisations.
 Dorset Nature Connection (£1.1m pending) - a 5 year empowerment and engagement initiative.
 Species Survival Fund (£1.3m pending) - Habitat restoration across 17 sites.
 A major land purchase of £8m (pending)

We currently have in excess of 600 active volunteers, working at Visitor Centres, nature reserves, and in our offices. Their contribution is vital, and we hope to increase the number of volunteers as we continue to develop the volunteer journey.

There are challenges of course and BB discussed the following areas:

- Grasping Opportunities – Dorset Wildlife Trust is presented with a range of opportunities and we need to balance resources to ensure we can take advantage of new opportunities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising – good opportunities for major projects and initiatives but the fundraising environment remains challenging with pressure on membership recruitment. • Wild Woodbury Development – good response from planners to our pre-application submission. We are now looking to move to next phase of development. • Dealing with Climate Change – identifying local wildlife and organisational threats, impacts and mitigations measures
7.	<p><u>Pathways to Local, national and Global impact – Mark Kibblewhite Chair of Trustees</u></p> <p>MK started by discussing where he feels DWT trustees have accountability: To the local membership for effective leadership and governance. To the Wildlife Trust Movement for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting collective responsibility and decision-making • Ensuring DWT contributes optimally to shared initiatives and actions. <p>There are layers of impact that we can exploit:</p> <p>Local Impact – DWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and exploiting a powerful local mandate <p>Collective Impact - The Wildlife Trust Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working effectively as a clustered network and collective movement <p>National and Global Impact – RSWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a trusted, evidence-based and influential voice speaking out for nature <p>Trustee priorities for the coming year will be Keep focused on delivering our strategic objectives - at pace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore and expand habitats and the abundance and diversity of wildlife. • Champion the natural environment, ensuring that people and wildlife benefit from local policies, decisions and management affecting land and sea. • Inspire people and communities to learn about, value and act for wildlife and Dorset’s wild places. Our ambition is that 1 in 4 people in Dorset are involved with nature. <p>Make sure the Trust is sustainable, while growing its momentum and capacities.</p> <p>MK closed by expressing sincere thanks to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members • Staff • Donors • Partners • Volunteers, including trustees

	<p>Questions:</p> <p>TB asked if South West Wildlife Trust was still in operation? BB replied to say that the SW Trusts do have a good network of communication, with regular meetings attended by CEO's as well as many other networks established across the region.</p> <p>LB asked if there was a minimum time after the 9 year limit for trustee service, before they could apply again? MK said there was no reason why they couldn't apply again after 1 year.</p> <p>A video message from Liz Bonnin was then shown, where she highlighted the good work being carried out locally in Dorset as well as wider across the Wildlife Trust movement.</p>
8.	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>MK presented the Helen Brotherton medal 2023 to Nigel Webb, on his retirement as a trustee and in recognition of the many years of involvement with Dorset Wildlife Trust. Nigel gave a full reply, giving recollections of his time and how the Trust has developed and grown over the years. He thanked all fellow trustees, staff and members for their support during his time in his various roles with the Trust.</p>

Meeting Closed at 12.20