

GWENT WILDLIFE TRUST LIMITED

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Charity No 242169 Company No 821535

MINUTES OF THE 59th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 21st September 2022 at 7pm

The meeting was again held via Zoom due to the continuing Covid 19 when the meeting was planned.

Chair's Welcome

Marc Leppard, Chair of Trustees, opened the meeting by introducing himself to the audience and explaining that Alison Willott had retired some months previously. Marc thanked Alison on behalf of the Trustees and staff for her tireless work on behalf of GWT during her years as Chair. She had handed over a stable organisation that was looking forward to the future. Marc presented Alison with a scroll and badge. Her name would now be on the Trust's Roll of Honour. Alison thanked Marc and was delighted to accept both scroll and badge.

Marc highlighted some of the Trust's many successes since last year's AGM. Income for the year was £1,448,926 and expenditure was £1,231,587. Overall the Trust's financial situation was looking healthy. Much hard work had also focussed on improving Risk Management and Health and Safety.

The practicalities of using the chat box to ask questions and the voting system were then explained to members. Debbie Stenner was thanked for setting up the meeting and would be providing the voting ballots.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Linda and Noel Bellamy, Hazel Bennett, Nicholas Beswick, Steve and Hilary Cieslik, Tom Clancy, Sarah Coleman, Alison and Peter Ellis, Kaf and John Faragher, Roger Finn, Richard Lewis, James Rattray, Liz O'Brien and Tanya Warren.

2. Minutes of the 2021 AGM

A copy of the Minutes had been made available on the Trust's website from the 1st September.

Marc proposed the acceptance of the minutes as a correct record. Members voted and these were agreed, 83% votes in favour, 17% abstentions. There were no matters arising.

3. Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2022

Marc explained that these documents had been available both online or by contacting the office since 1st September. No-one had made any comments or queries and anyone who now wanted to, could add a note in the chat box to which our CEO would respond.

Marc asked members to vote on acceptance of the Annual Report and Financial statement. This was agreed, 80% in favour and 20% abstentions.

4. Adoption of Auditors for year ending 31 March 2023

The Chair proposed the re-appointment of UHY Hacker Young of Newport as Auditors for the financial year 2022-23. Marc explained that as we had used the same auditors for a significant number of years, the auditing process would be put out to tender next year.

This was agreed, 84% in favour and 16% abstentions.

5. Election of Trustees

Two new trustees had been co-opted, following advertisements and our selection process. Kate Coleman and Richard Howell had already attended a number of Board meetings and made valuable contributions. The two biographies had been available on the website. Marc asked the membership to agree the election of our two new trustees

This was agreed, 85% in favour and 15% abstentions.

6. Introduction of Board Officers

Marc explained to the meeting that the Board officers had been agreed by the Trustees. Officers for the next year would be: Marc Leppard, Chair, Rob Waller, Vice Chair, John Newton, Treasurer, and Sue Finn, Secretary.

7. Presentation by CEO, Adam Taylor

Adam took as his theme, for this year's presentation, "People Engagement Work". At the heart of the Trust's work was a vision of bringing people closer to nature in a landscape rich in wildlife. The Trust aimed to have engaged with 1 in 4 people, (1/4 million) residents of Gwent, by 2030. All 46 Wildlife Trusts were engaged in this work under the title "Team Wilder". He outlined how this was taking shape at GWT. Two strands were being followed: Community Organised and GWT Identified Needs. Adam gave 4 examples already happening.

Community Organised:

Stand for Nature Wales. A Pan Wales Scheme for young people aged 9-14 years. They had identified their main concern as climate change and were involved in lots of volunteering activities to help alleviate local problems. These included activities such as building bog gardens.

Next Door Nature. Money was available for all Trusts from the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund. GWT would be working with the community in Pillgwenlly, Newport which had been identified as a diverse and under-represented area.

GWT Organised:

Trainees. This had been identified by the Trust as a way of helping young people wanting to work within the environmental sector to access training and begin to build a relevant CV. The Trust had recently employed 5 trainees who had worked in the Blaenau Gwent area, gaining valuable experience.

Wild Health. This project had doubled in size since January. 19 groups had engaged and 350+ people had been helped. These were not one-off sessions but aimed to help

provide long term solutions. It was hoped that by 2030, this would be seen as standard intervention by the Aneurin Bevan Health Trust and other providers.

Short presentations were then given by two staff members of staff, Rob Magee, Youth Engagement Officer within the Nature Based Solutions Team, and Andy Karran, Evidence Manager in the Nature Recovery Team. Rob spoke about the Nature Nurturer's group who had been involved in building both bug and bee hotels to encourage pollinators. Andy focussed on the importance of bugs and how their numbers could be measured via citizen science. He drew particular attention to Shril Carder bees, one of the most important species that needed careful monitoring within Gwent.

Marc thanked Adam, Rob and Andy for their presentations and all staff and volunteers that were making our work so successful.

The evening's main event.

Adam then introduced our speaker for the evening, Professor Dave Goulson, from the University of Sussex, who specialises in the conservation of insects, particularly bumblebees. Members were given a fascinating talk, that emphasised the importance of insects and the dire consequences of ignoring their rapidly falling numbers.

Marc drew the meeting to a close by thanking Professor Goulson for such an informative and thought-provoking presentation.