

Minutes of the 61st Annual General Meeting of Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Saturday 15th October 2022

Carlton Marshes nature reserve, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft and by teleconference

The meeting commenced at 12.00pm and was chaired by Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Chair, James Alexander.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Lord Tollemache, Peter Wilson, David Barker, Dawn Girling, Julian Roughton.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 60th Annual General Meeting

The Chair confirmed that no one wished to propose alterations to the Minutes.

In considering the Minutes, the Chair drew Members' attention to the question noted in item 6 regarding the requirement for 5% of Members to support the call for an Annual Meeting, under the new Articles of Association which were adopted at the 60th AGM. The Board have considered the level and also discussed this with Mr Robinson and remain committed to 5% as an appropriate level for the era of digital communications we are in.

The Board thanked Mr Robinson for his interest and commitment to high governance standards for the Trust and welcomed openness and scrutiny between Members and the Board.

- The Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record and **APPROVED** by the meeting.

3. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees by the Chair, James Alexander

The Chair began by reflecting on the annual summary of the Trust's year sent to all Members. He noted the scope of activity is an indication of the inspiring and impactful charity their Trust is, even during a year in which the Trust and Society were still adapting to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

Looking to the future, and the many challenges facing the natural world, the Chair affirmed the Board of Trustees is determined that Suffolk Wildlife Trust will continue to be a strong, confident and influential voice for the county's wildlife and wild places.

The Chair directed Members to the summary accounts, which were presented as bar charts (and the full accounts pack which was shared on the Trust's website). These give an overview of how the Trust is funded - and most importantly where we invest our resources to deliver our impact for nature. The Chair reported the Trust is in good financial health and thanked members for their support. He noted membership underpins everything the Trust does and the support of Members in every community of Suffolk gives the Trust our mandate to speak up for nature.

The plans for the establishment of an entirely new nature reserve Martlesham Wilds had just been shared at the Conservation Day, and the Chair reported that growing our nature reserves into significant blocks of land which are connected into the wider countryside, continues to be a major focus for the Trust. This year three nature reserves were extended, adding 101 acres (41 ha) to the land we care for.

Rowley Grove, an ancient woodland adjoining Arger Fen & Spouse's Vale nature reserve, near Sudbury is a quintessential English bluebell wood, with small leaved lime and wild cherry trees. As is so often the case, the Trust had to act quickly to secure the purchase and this was made possible by legacy gifts set aside for urgent opportunities such as this. Rowley Grove is now forever under the protective ownership of the Trust.

The Chair reminded Members of the remarkable transformation of the landscape of the Suffolk Broads achieved by the Trust over the last two decades. The Trust's three Broadland nature reserves, Castle Marshes, Carlton Marshes and Oulton Marshes are now linked up into a 1000 acre wetland landscape, achieved through 23 different land purchases. This year we purchased a further small marsh on the western edge of Carlton Marshes, adding to the habitat network.

The Chair reported that the largest land purchase of the year was a substantial block of grassland and arable fields alongside Market Weston Fen. This was made possible by a legacy gift from Rosemary Wilson and an extraordinary response to the fundraising appeal from Members, the local community and Charitable Trusts. Over the coming years we will 'let nature take the lead' and watch the fields transition naturally into wildlife habitat.

The Chair added that we have also started the wilding journey at Foxburrow, near Woodbridge, with the former arable fields now reverting to nature.

The final, and by far the largest addition of the year, was an extraordinary gift of grazing marshes on the Alde estuary, alongside Alde Mudflats and across the water from Hazlewood Marshes. This has created a substantial 800 acre 'triangle' of habitat across the estuary. Like Alde Mudflats, the marshes are remote and inaccessible for people. Indeed the limited public access to this part of the Suffolk coast has helped to make it an important refuge area for birds. The Chair noted retaining this safe, undisturbed refuge was very much the intention of the gift and it will be managed as a quiet reserve.

The Chair moved on to remind Members that their Trust's ambition to 'bring nature back' reaches beyond our nature reserves. In the wilder future we strive for, the Trust's reserves will have a renewed sense of purpose as the ecological hotspots that can seed nature's recovery into the surrounding landscape. He noted the investment in a new team of farmland wildlife advisors and community advisors will enable everyone to play their part in this, retaining the focus on grassroots action which is the hallmark of the Trust.

The Chair concluded his report by thanking the Board of Trustees, the CEO and the staff team.

4. Ordinary resolutions:

The Chair, James Alexander proposed the following resolutions:

i) To approve the annual accounts of the Charity

Proxy votes received in advance: For 70 / Against 0

- The proposal was **APPROVED** at the meeting.

ii) To approve the re-appointment of Peters Elworthy & Moore as auditors to the Charity

Proxy votes received in advance: For 70 / Against 0

- The proposal was **APPROVED** at the meeting.

5. Ordinary resolutions:

The Honorary Treasurer, Calum Thomson proposed the following resolution:

iii) To re-elect James Alexander as a Trustee

Proxy votes received in advance: For 70 / Against 0

- The proposal was **APPROVED** at the meeting.

The Chair, James Alexander proposed the following resolutions:

iv) To re-elect Sue Hooton as a Trustee

Proxy votes received in advance: For 70 / Against 0

- The proposal was **APPROVED** at the meeting.

v) To re-elect Robyn Llewellyn as a Trustee

Proxy votes received in advance: For 69 / Against 0

- The proposal was **APPROVED** at the meeting.

vi) To re-elect Anna Saltmarsh as a Trustee

Proxy votes received in advance: For 69 / Against 0

- The proposal was **APPROVED** at the meeting.

6. Any Other Business

There were no items notified in advance.

7. Volunteer of the Year Award

The Trust's President, William Kendall, made a special award to the SOS Swifts team. SOS Swifts is a project partnership between Suffolk Bird Group and Suffolk Wildlife Trust. It has captured the imaginations of communities across the county, and as well as providing the nesting sites swifts need, is building a new and motivated network of community advocates for nature. With more than 1000 swift boxes installed in Suffolk already, it is an outstanding example of the impact for nature the dedication of volunteers creates.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, both in person and on Zoom.

Signed.....

Date.....