

**Minutes of the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust  
Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 4pm at Museum of Making, Silk Mill Lane, Derby**

**In attendance:**

Cara Turton-Chambers (Trustee)  
David Renwick (Trustee)  
Gillian Foxcroft (Trustee)  
Kathy Bosley (Treasurer)  
Nigel Huish (Vice-Chair)  
Paul Lynch (Trustee)  
Jo Smith Chief Executive Officer)

29 members (the register of attendees is retained by the Trust)

The Chair welcomed everyone and noted that apologies received would be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

The Chair made reflections on the Trust's 60<sup>th</sup> Year, highlighting that the year had been challenging, with the COVID pandemic, war in Ukraine and cost of living crisis and that despite this the Trust has achieved so much and a lot of this being due to the Trust's supporters, volunteers, and members.

The Chair highlighted several key achievements including the reintroduction of Beavers at Willington, Allestree Park as the UK's largest urban rewilding site, the land purchase of Rose End Meadows thanks to the generosity of members and the Trust's wellbeing work including projects in Chesterfield and Derby. The Chair also highlighted that the Trust is a Real living wage employer, partner with the Diversity Sustainability Initiative and a Disability Confident Committed Employer.

The Chair finished by giving thanks to all who support the Trust's work and asked for their continued support.

**1 Apologies for absence**

Amanda Elahi (Trustee)  
Charlotte Cremers (Trustee)  
Ian Holmes (Director of Finance and Company Secretary)  
Lynn Crowe (Trustee)

**2 Approval of the Minutes of the 59th AGM (Annual General Meeting) Held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**The minutes of the 59th AGM were accepted as a true record by a show of hands with one member abstaining.**

### **3 Receive and adopt the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022**

The Treasurer presented the annual accounts to March 2022.

The Treasurer reported that the Trust emerged from Covid restrictions in a strong financial position and the last financial year ended with a £300k surplus. This surplus was less than the previous year, due to the high volume of projects and activities that were delivered by the staff and volunteer teams.

The Treasurer stated that the Trust income was £1m more than the previous year and that notably the Trust received £600k more in grants, a substantial proportion of this related to the Green Recovery Challenge fund.

The Treasurer said that the Trust also had a successful appeal for the purchase of the Rose End Meadows site and the Trust would like to thank members and supporters for stepping up at such short notice to help the Trust acquire this land.

The Treasurer noted that there was a reduction in Covid support, as expected, due to the loosening of the restrictions and that the Trust's retail income started to recover as shops and cafes reopened.

The Treasurer said that with the additional projects delivered, expenditure increased and to strengthen the Organisation additional staff were recruited, and more external suppliers utilised to deliver on grant commitments.

The Treasurer reported that at the end of the financial year the Trust had reserves of £3.3m; £2.7m of this is restricted funds which relates to specific project obligations the Trust is required to deliver which left £600k in reserves to support emerging requirements.

The Treasurer stated that as part of the preparation of the year-end accounts the Finance Director and Treasurer met with the Trust's Auditors. The Auditors undertook a detailed transactional audit and were pleased with the results and gave the Trust a clean bill of health.

The Treasurer noted that this is the third year that BHP have acted as the Trust's auditors, and the Trust will undertake a tender review process during the next year.

### **4. Adoption of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22**

**The Adoption of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22 was carried unanimously by a show of hands.**

### **5. Appointment of the Trust's Auditors**

The Chair proposed the reappointment of BHP as the Trust's Auditors for the current financial year.

**The decision was carried unanimously by a show of hands and BHP Chartered Accountants were appointed the Trust's auditors for 2022/2023**

### **6. Election of Trustees**

The Chair explained that Trustees remain in office for three years from the date they are elected and may stand for re-election at the end of the three year period provided they have less than six years' service.

Two trustees, Jim Dixon and Wendy Furness were nominated by the Board for election. Each Trustee said a few words about themselves and why they wished to be appointed as Trustee.

**Jim Dixon**

Proposed by: Cara Turton-Chambers

Seconded by: Stephan Presland

**Wendy Furness**

Proposed by: Richard Walsh

Seconded by: Gillian Foxcroft

**The decision to elect the above two Trustees was carried unanimously by a show of hands.**

With there being no other business, the Chair responded to the questions tabled in advance by members.

**Questions- Diane Hardy**

*What is the most urgent need at the moment?*

The Government are weakening laws that protect the environment and going back on issues such as fracking and rewarding farmers for being environmentally friendly. We are at a pivotal moment for protecting nature.

*Is there money available should some land become available at short notice?*

Buying and securing land for nature and rewilding is the best way to ensure we defend nature. It is crucial at the moment. We have funds we can draw on but not enough. We need donations to enable us to do this. Our Defend Nature appeal is launching in a few days to help us do exactly this. Please help us by donating.

**Questions- Ruth Calladine**

*Is the current government worsening climate change and biodiversity- what can be done?*

Yes. Just two weeks ago the Government announced they are looking to weaken laws that protect the environment, allow fracking, and may go back on rewarding farmers for being environmentally friendly. This is all hugely damaging and fuels the nature and climate crisis. The Trust is supporting the Wildlife Trusts national campaign against this Government plan.

*What has Derbyshire Wildlife Trust done to object to further housing plans on Heanor green spaces? I have only seen one hedgehog this year!*

We have responded to at least ten applications in the Heanor/Langley Mill area in recent years that potentially affect areas of green space. We currently have objections on a number of these due to the loss of wildlife that will result from the development. In other cases, we have already been through planning appeals and secured changes to the layout of some developments.

## Question – Richard Patton

*Is it time for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to consider spraying off half the bracken in Overdale, and also attempting to bruise other trial sections each year for 4-6 years? This would allow DWT (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust) to see how effective both are in the real world, with the cost in manpower, resources and the actual gains for nature recorded over a period of time, so evidence-based decisions can be made. Knowing how much labour it actually takes to control the bracken in these small trial areas, can then show how much labour will be needed on all DWT sites to just stop the spread of, and ideally then reduce, the bracken level and have a positive impact by reintroduce natural habitat.*

We are looking at how we can manage these types of sites using a more nature-based, less human management methodology. For example, restoring the canopy on Overdale would reduce the amount of bracken through shading and pigs are being used on other sites, and have had a significant impact on the species.

We need to find less interventionist management strategies to do this in order to increase the area of land that we can work on, which we really need to do to have the impact that nature needs across the county.

Bracken is a native species in the UK, originally found as the understorey in woodlands across the country. Together with the other species of ground flora at Overdale, we can see that Overdale is a woodland habitat, missing the upper canopy layers due to previous management.

We are trying to reduce our use of herbicides across the board, predominantly because the impacts are not fully understood.

The Chair noted that another member had raised a question which was being treated as a complaint and would be addressed through the Trust's complaints process.

The Chair stated that any other business needs to be tabled in advance and no business had been tabled.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for their support and the meeting ended at 16:35pm.