



Kent
Wildlife Trust

**65th Annual General Meeting of the
Members of Kent Wildlife Trust**

Company No: 00633098

Held in person at Tyland Barn, Chatham Road, Sandling ME14 3BD
and online via Zoom Webinar
on
Saturday 15 July 2023 at 1pm.

Unconfirmed Minutes

Present:

Chris West (Trustee & Council Chair)

Evan Bowen-Jones (Chief Executive Officer)

Nick Barter (Trustee)

Liz Lowe (Trustee)

Tom Woolgar (Trustee)

Members attending online: 15

Charles Tassell (Trustee & Vice Chair)

Rachel Hoey (Trustee & Honorary Treasurer)

Jane Ibbotson (Trustee)

Alison Mings (Trustee-elect)

Members attending in person: 19

Apologies received:

John Leigh-Pemberton (Honorary President)

Richard Piper (member)

Colin Peters (Trustee)

1. Welcome from the Chairman, Dr Chris West

AGM23.001 The Chairman welcomed the members attending the 65th Kent Wildlife Trust Annual General Meeting. In addition to normal housekeeping matters, the following points were noted:

- [a] The meeting was being recorded. Anyone present in person who did not wish to appear on the recording should make themselves known to a member of staff.
- [b] More than 30 persons entitled to vote had joined the meeting. The meeting was therefore quorate.
- [c] Resolutions would be put to a vote by a show of hands for those attending in person, and by a Zoom vote for those attending online. Resolutions would pass by a simple majority.

[d] The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements had been published to members on the KWT website in advance of the meeting.

[e] Members had been invited to submit questions in advance which would be answered at the end of the formal business. Further questions could be submitted by pen and paper or via the Zoom Q&A function and would be answered within the published minutes of the meeting.

[f] Technical problems should be made known to staff via the Zoom chat function.

2. Minutes of the 64th AGM held on Saturday 23 July 2022

AGM23.002 The minutes of the 64th AGM held on Saturday 23 July 2022 were put to the members for confirmation. A vote to accept the minutes was held, and the minutes were confirmed as a true record with no corrections or amendments.

3. Presentation of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ended 31st December 2022.

AGM23.003 Members received the Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2022, a copy of which had been published to members in advance on the Trust's website.

3.1 Chairman's annual report on the year

AGM23.004 The Chair of Council, Dr Chris West, gave his annual report, the full transcript of which would be made available on the Trust's website.

3.2 Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

AGM23.005 The Honorary Treasurer, Rachel Hoey gave her annual report, the full transcript of which would be made available on the Trust's website.

4. Appointment of auditors

AGM23.006 The Honorary Treasurer reported that the Risk and Finance Committee had met on 15 June 2023 to review the performance of the Trust's auditors BHP, who had been in post for three years. In compliance with Article 17.2 the Risk and Finance Committee had recommended to Council that BHP be reappointed for a further year. Council accepted the recommendation, and the reappointment was duly approved.

5. Retirement and Rotation of Trustees

5.1 Trustees retiring by rotation and standing for re-election

AGM23.007 Two trustees were retiring by rotation and standing for re-election having served terms of three years since their last election. Votes were held and Charles Tassell and Colin Peters were both duly re-elected.

5.2 New trustees

- AGM23.008
- [a] Two new trustees were standing for their first election. In October 2022 Council had appointed Nick Barter as a new trustee and member of Council. Nick was a civil servant, currently holding the role of Deputy Director for Net Zero at DEFRA and had a substantial career working on environmental and climate policy, including the development of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan. As was required by the Trust's Articles of Association, Nick was required to retire from post and stand for election. A vote was held, and Nick was duly elected.
 - [b] Alison Mings was a qualified accountant with a career in finance, most recently at Kent County Council managing the Council's treasury and investments. Alison was an experienced charity trustee, with a strong background in charity finance. Council recommended Alison to the members for election. A vote was held, and Alison was duly elected.

5.3 Resolution to re-elect Chris West

- AGM23.009
- The Vice-Chair, Charles Tassell took the Chair for item 5.3. Members received a resolution from Council to re-elect Chris West for a further, exceptional, term of office. The resolution had been made available to read on the KWT website along with the agenda. The following points were noted:
- [a] In 2024 the Trust was due to lose by retirement three long-standing trustees, including the Chair of Council Dr Chris West.
 - [b] Earlier in the year Council had conducted a skills audit of the current trustees and had recruited to fill identified gaps.
 - [c] Council felt that at the present time in the Trust's development, as it launched the 2030 Strategy, it would be detrimental to lose Chris from the Board. Council would appreciate the ability to reappoint Chris as its Chair as it was felt his unique skillset was a particular match to the organisation at the present time and his continuation would provide surety of organisational stability and mitigate the risk of loss of momentum rebuilt since the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - [d] The proposal to extend Chris's term of office beyond the normal three terms of three years was exceptional and it was Council's intention to begin recruitment for a replacement Chair no later than the end of 2024 to allow sufficient time for an orderly handover when appropriate.
 - [e] The resolution would, in effect, extend Chris's term by an additional two years.
 - [f] A vote was held, and the resolution passed. Members duly approved the re-election of Chris West for a further term of three years from the current date.

6. Report from the Chief Executive Officer

AGM23.010 The Chief Executive Officer, Evan Bowen-Jones gave a presentation outlining some of the Trust's future plans, the full transcript of which would be made available on the Trust's website.

7. Questions from Members

AGM23.011 One question had been submitted by Members in advance:

Fencing at Polhill (question submitted by Ruth Calderwood)

1. Please could you explain why perimeter fencing with barbed wire has been installed at Polhill as this poses a significant hazard to wildlife?
2. Do you have a fencing policy that focuses on the needs of wildlife?
3. How do you manage contractors to ensure that when they are working on behalf of KWT they do not harm fragile environments?

In response, the CEO explained that:

- [a] The fencing installed at Polhill was a livestock fence of a standard design to keep grazing animals in. The barb was necessary to prevent animals leaning on, and breaking it, and prevented animals from hurting themselves, for example by pushing their heads through and catching their ear-tags or becoming entangled.
- [b] Significant consideration was given to where fencing was placed and the Trust tried to use as little as possible, indeed removing it where it could. Where fencing was used, it may have multiple purposes, including marking ownership boundaries and restricting people from disturbing habitats and wildlife. At Polhill specifically, by fencing boundaries and removing internal fencing the Trust was reducing the barriers in the landscape. The Trust was looking to utilise new technologies to enable fenceless grazing where possible.
- [c] Contractors only worked where they were directed, and methods were agreed in advance of work commencing. In most cases, the Trust's fencing was undertaken by small track vehicles or by hand to minimise the amount of disturbance created. The Trust's Wardens were always looking to increase the gain for wildlife in the work it did, and work was only carried out where it was felt there would be a net benefit to the whole site.
- [d] The Chairman thanked Ruth for submitting her question. A member raised a question in-meeting which was inaudible to the recording and the Secretary. The Chairman advised he would introduce the member to Nick Barter after the meeting who would be the most appropriate person to speak to and who would be happy to have a conversation. The Chair requested that any further questions be submitted via the pens and paper provided/or via the chat function online and would be answered within the minutes. This was to ensure answers could be directed to the most appropriate member of staff and as full responses as possible could be given. [Secretary's note: no further questions were submitted].

Closing remarks

AGM23.012 The Chairman thanked Members for attending and for their continued support. The Chairman further thanked the staff and volunteers of Kent Wildlife Trust for all their hard work contributing to the Trust's mission. The meeting was closed, to be followed by the Wilder Kent Awards.