

**Minutes of the ninety-sixth meeting of the Board of Trustees of  
the Open Spaces Society held at 18.00 on Thursday 16 January 2025  
by videoconference**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Phil Wadey (chairman) Stuart Bain Graham Bathe Chris Beney John Hall James Lean Andrew Packman Tara-Jane Sutcliffe
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Kate Ashbrook (general secretary)

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1/25 There were no declarations.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Nicola Hodgson**

2/25 It was noted with sadness that Nicola Hodgson had retired as our case officer (town and village greens and open spaces) on 15 January after more than 25 years' service.

3/25 It was unanimously agreed to mark her service by making her an honorary life member of the society, to be presented at the AGM.

**Sarah Bucks**

4/25 The trustees congratulated our member Sarah Bucks on being made an MBE; she has done significant work on rights of way in Somerset and, with Phil Wadey, was co-author of *Rights of Way: restoring the record*.

**Andrew Bennett**

5/25 It was noted with sadness that Andrew Bennett, who was a member of our executive committee from 1981 to 1988, had died aged 85. He was a backbench MP for Stockport North, then Denton and Reddish, from 1974 to 2005, and was extremely helpful to our cause.

**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 12 DECEMBER 2024**

6/25 The minutes of the meeting on 12 December 2024 were approved and it was agreed to publish them on the website.

## **LOCAL CORRESPONDENT'S ACTION**

- 7/25 It was noted that one of our local correspondents had applied to the magistrates' court regarding obstructions on public paths which the highway authority had not addressed after being served notice under section 130A-D of the Highways Act 1980. The society would represent the local correspondent in court.

## **INVESTMENTS**

- 8/25 The treasurer, Stuart Bain, reported that our account has been completed and opened with JM Finn. The finance committee would discuss the next steps.

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 9/25 The trustees approved the chairman's proposed revised terms of reference for the general purposes committee. These authorise the committee, when satisfied that exceptional and unforeseeable circumstances have arisen, to declare exceptionality and authorise modest additional expenditure on a matter previously authorised by the board. The terms of reference would be reviewed in August when the trustees discuss committees and working parties.

## **TRUSTEES DUE FOR RE-ELECTION AND ELECTION AT THE AGM**

- 10/25 It was noted that Graham Bathe's and Phil Wadey's three-year terms expire this year and that they are eligible to stand for re-election for a further term. James Lean and Andrew Packman would be eligible to stand for election at the AGM should they wish. James and Andrew confirmed that they wished to stand.
- 11/25 Phil Wadey said that he wished to stand down as chairman in 2026 when he would have served for six years, and Graham Bathe said he wished to stand down as vice-chairman, but would speak to the chairman to agree the timing, to ensure that they retire at different times.

## **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) WORKING PARTY**

- 12/25 The EDI working party, consisting of Stuart Bain, James Lean, and the general secretary, had met on 8 January. The trustees discussed the notes of the meeting, and agreed that we needed to embed our policy statement in all board decisions by ensuring it is taken into consideration, and the working party members would hold trustees to account. The working party would meet at least once a year, and probably every six months, to review progress.
- 13/25 It was further agreed to commit to completing a round of trustee recruitment this year, with the aim of having two co-opted members after the AGM, and that we would consider how to attract people who will bring different perspectives. The trustees would start this process in March.
- 14/25 It was noted that our website is our shop window to recruit members, local correspondents, and trustees and that this thinking will be incorporated in the web redesign.
- 15/25 The trustees agreed the proposed further actions to be added to the risk register item A4, 'A risk of not being able to attract new trustees to give a more diverse balance to the board.' These will be further considered when we start trustee recruitment.
- 16/25 The trustees approved the proposed terms of reference for the EDI working party, noting that Stuart Bain wished to stand down as a member.

**REVIEW OF MEETING**

17/25 The trustees were content with the meeting.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

18/25 Thursday 13 February 2025 at 18.00.

The meeting ended at 18.55.

---

**OTHER MEETINGS IN 2025**

Thursday 20 March\*

Monday 7 April

Wednesday 21 May

Friday 13 June\*

Thursday 7 August

Thursday 4 September\*

Thursday 2 October

Thursday 6 November

Thursday 4 December\*

(Thursday 3 July AGM)

\* = quarterly meetings



Phil Wadey  
Chair of Trustees