



Kent Wildlife Trust

66th 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 20th July 2024 at 12.30pm.

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Present:

John Leigh-Pemberton (Hon. President)
Charles Tassell (Trustee & Vice Chair)
Rachel Hoey (Trustee & Honorary Treasurer)
Jane Ibbotson (Trustee)
Colin Peters (Trustee)
Kiran Rayner (Trustee-elect)
Members attending online: 15

Chris West (Trustee & Council Chair)
Evan Bowen-Jones (Chief Executive Officer)
Nick Barter (Trustee)
Alison Mings (Trustee)
Tom Woolgar (Trustee)

Members attending in person: 21

Apologies received:

Lady Rosemary Kingsdown

Liz Lowe (trustee)

1. Opening remarks from the Hon. President John Leigh Pemberton	
AGM24.001	The Hon. President gave his opening remarks and outlined the agenda for the meeting.
2. Welcome from the Chairman, Dr Chris West	
AGM24.002	<p>The Chairman welcomed the members attending the 66th Kent Wildlife Trust Annual General Meeting. In addition to normal housekeeping matters, the following points were noted:</p> <p>[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.</p> <p>[b] More than 30 persons entitled to vote had joined the meeting. The meeting was</p>

	<p>therefore quorate.</p> <p>[c] Resolutions would be put to a vote by a show of hands for those attending in person, and by a Zoom poll for those attending online. Resolutions would pass by a simple majority.</p> <p>[d] The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements had been published to members on the KWT website in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>[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.</p> <p>[f] Technical problems should be made known to staff via the Zoom chat function.</p>
3. Minutes of the 65th AGM held on Saturday 15 July 2023	
AGM24.003	The minutes of the 65 th AGM held on Saturday 15 July 2023 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.
4. Presentation of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the Year ended 31st December 2023.	
AGM24.004	Members received the Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 st December 2023, a copy of which had been published in advance on the Trust's website.
4.1 Chairman's annual report on the year	
AGM24.005	The Chair of Council, Dr Chris West, gave his annual report, the full recording of which would be made available on the Trust's website.
4.2 Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023	
AGM24.006	The Honorary Treasurer, Rachel Hoey gave her annual report, the full recording of which would be made available on the Trust's website.
5. Appointment of auditors	
AGM24.007	The Honorary Treasurer reported that the Risk and Finance Committee had met on 13 June 2024 to review the performance of the Trust's auditors BHP, who had been in post for four 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. Members were not required to vote on the reappointment.
6. Retirement and Rotation of Trustees	

6.1 Trustees retiring by rotation and not standing for re-election	
AGM24.008	Two trustees retired by rotation and did not standing for re-election having served the maximum of three terms of three years: Charles Tassell (current Vice-Chair of Council) and Colin Peters. The Chair thanked Charles and Colin for their years of dedicated commitment and service to the Trust.
6.2 Trustees retiring by rotation and standing for re-election	
AGM24.009	Three trustees were retiring by rotation and standing for re-election having served terms of three years since their last election. Votes were held and Jane Ibbotson, Tom Woolgar and Liz Lowe were all duly re-elected.
6.3 New trustees – motion to elect Kiran Rayner as a member of Council	
AGM24.010	<p>[a] Kiran Rayner, having been recruited via an open recruitment process, was proposed by trustees for election as a member of Council. Kiran was a full-time sustainability strategy consultant specialising in environmental projects, ranging from decarbonisation and climate resilience to the circular economy and ESG reporting. Kiran had previously worked for the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and had recently completed a course at the University of Oxford in sustainable finance.</p> <p>[b] Kiran was considered well-qualified for the role and brought additional experience to the Board including representation of a younger age group and his mixed-race heritage. The Chair noted that KWT was a membership organisation that should represent everyone in Kent and this diversity should be reflected across our organisation, therefore Kiran’s insights and experience would be valuable additions.</p> <p>[c] A vote was held and Kiran was duly elected.</p>
6.4 Retirement of the Hon. President John Leigh Pemberton	
AGM4.011	<p>The Chair was sad to report that after 18 years in the role, the Honorary President, John Leigh Pemberton was retiring from his position. John had first joined the Trust as a trustee in 1996, becoming Chair of Council in 1998 until his retirement in 2006 when he was subsequently appointed Honorary President.</p> <p>Thanks were offered to John for his many years of support.</p>
7. Report from the Chief Executive Officer	
AGM24.012	The Chief Executive Officer, Evan Bowen-Jones gave a presentation outlining some of the Trust’s future plans, the full recording of which would be made available on the Trust’s website.
8. Questions from Members	
AGM24.013	Three questions had been submitted by Members in advance:

1. Car parking (question submitted by Lesley Williams)

Why are members charged for car parking on KWT reserves when other organisations such as English Heritage and the National Trust include this as a benefit with the membership fee?

In response, the CEO explained that:

This was something the Trust had looked at very carefully however unfortunately HMRC rules counted free car parking for members as a 'VAT-able' benefit. This meant that if free parking was included in its membership, the Trust would not be able to claim gift aid on its membership fees and in addition would have to pay VAT on car parking income. This would therefore have a serious impact on the Trust's income. Bigger, national centralised organisations (such as English Heritage and the National Trust) had been able to agree bespoke arrangements with HMRC to enable them to include free parking with their memberships. As one of 46 individual trusts within the Federation it was difficult to negotiate a similar individual agreement. The upside was that all the income raised from the car parking charges [other than fines which were retained by Euro Car Parks] supported the management and maintenance of the reserves. This was particularly helpful as the Trust dealt with continued vandalism on the sites.

2. Chough reintroduction update (question submitted by John and Emily Neighbour)

Please can we have an update on the chough reintroduction project?

In response, the Director of Conservation, Paul Hadaway provided the following:

The chough reintroduction programme was an excellent example of how the Trust was using flagship species to drive and consolidate the wider work the Trust did; bringing together habitat (chalk grassland) restoration, conservation grazing and work with farmers and landowners through farmer clusters to create the necessary conditions to return an iconic Kent species, whilst enabling the Trust to conduct serious science to support the way it managed that project.

The Trust was in year 3 of bringing cohorts of birds out to an undisclosed release aviary in Dover, releasing out into the wild to form a wild population. The first cohort to be released unfortunately didn't do too well with the adult birds being a touch too mature to effectively mind map the local area. For the last two years birds had been released at fledgling age, when they were more effectively able to do so. 12 birds were currently out flying with 8 being regular (visible) visitors to Dover Castle. It would take another 5 or so years of releases to reach a group of between 30-40 at which stage the population would be able to continue to develop naturally.

3. Exmoor ponies (question submitted by Bill Galbally)

3. Does the Trust have a breeding population of Exmoor ponies on any of its reserves and if not, why not? Given its conservation value as the nearest thing to a wild horse, what is the Trust's view on trying to play its part in promoting the genetic diversity of this animal?

In response, the Director of Conservation, Paul Hadaway provided the following:

KWT had approximately 700 head of grazing animals, most of which were rare breeds. The Trust was now developing the breed profile as part of work to understanding the impact of grazing species on its habitats and move to more naturalistic grazing regimes. Through these species the Trust was trying to replicate the natural grazing conditions that existed when the habitats

	<p>were originally formed and part of that was a move away from Konik ponies, a polish breed, which had been a mainstay of conservation grazing for 30-40 years and very effective in conservation but not actually the breed the UK would have had. Therefore, the Trust was looking more to other breeds such as Fell ponies and Exmoors. The Exmoor ponies currently at the Blean came from one of the round-ups on Exmoor a few years ago and the Trust will continue to move our grazing stock to more native species.</p> <p>In turn, this work would support the genetic diversity of the breed, as would the Trust's work with the bison as part of the Endangered European Species Programme.</p>
Closing remarks, retiring Hon. President John Leigh Pemberton	
AGM24.014	<p>The retiring Honorary President, John Leigh Pemberton gave his closing remarks, noting that the Annual Report for the Year had been enormously impressive. John congratulated the Trust on the pace and scale of what it had achieved and wished it all the best in the future, knowing that it was a special organisation with a special character that would continue to thrive and prosper. John thanked those present for attending.</p>
Chairman's thanks, Dr Chris West	
AGM24.015	<p>The Chairman noted that through the efforts of the staff and the leadership of the organisation the Trust was one of the leading and most innovative and entrepreneurial organisations in the whole of the UK for nature protection and management. Dr West thanked those present for attending and expressed his hope that everyone left with a sense of shared pride in how significant the work of the Trust was. The meeting was formally closed.</p>