

**Minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, held on  
Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019 at  
Heriot-Watt University,  
Scottish Borders Campus, Nether Road,  
Galashiels TD1 3HF**



### **Introductory remarks**

The Chair, Linda Rosborough, welcomed everyone to the Scottish Wildlife Trust's 55<sup>th</sup> AGM.

### **Apologies**

A number of apologies had been received and noted.

- 1. To approve the minutes from the 54th AGM held at the National Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF.**

The minutes were formally **approved** as a true and accurate record.

**Proposer:** Ann Brackenridge

**Seconder:** Kevin Duffy

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

- 2. To receive the Council's report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019**

The Chair gave a presentation of the work the Trust had done in the previous year. This included highlighting the work of volunteers across the Trust's activities, updating members on the work done to engage younger people as well as noting some personal highlights and key statistics from her second year as Chair of the Trust.

Jo Pike, Chief Executive then shared her thoughts on some of the Trust's key activities and achievements during 2018-19. She gave her deepest thanks to all present and all the Trust's members and supporters, for making these and many more achievements possible. She also gave many thanks to all of the Trust's funders and partners for their continued support.

Susan McKenzie, Director of Finance and Resources, presented the report and accounts to the Annual General Meeting and provided an overview on the Trust's financial situation.

- 3. To re-appoint auditors of the Trust: RSM, Centenary House, 69 Wellington St, Glasgow G2 6HG.**

The Chair proposed the re-appointment of RSM as external auditors.

**Proposer:** Dr Tim Duffy

**Seconder:** James Rust

RSM were **re-appointed** as auditors for the Trust.

#### **4. To note co-option of members to Council**

The Chair reminded members of the background to the Articles of Association which had been adopted at the 54<sup>th</sup> AGM. Whilst there were no elections to Council this year, the Trust had strengthened its diversity and skills on Council through the co-option of three individuals.

Nicky Munro, trustee and Convener of the Nominations Committee then outlined the background and experience of the individuals co-opted during the year - Karen McKellar, Bill Lambert and Carey Coombs.

The Chair welcomed the new co-optees to Council. She then noted that two trustees, David Lindgren and Colin Macintosh were standing down from Council. She acknowledged their positive contributions to Council and committees during their term, stating that their constructive challenge, input and support will be missed by staff and trustees alike. On behalf of the Trust, the Chair thanked them both for their valuable service and wished them every future success and happiness.

In response to a question from Dr Jon Barnes, the Chair confirmed that the decision to fill the co-opted spaces this year had been due to the need to address specific skills gaps on the board, most importantly with regard to financial, investment and pension management as well as ensuring smooth succession planning for the Vice Chair for Finance who was scheduled to step down in 2020.

She added that it was very much expected that this would be an exception to the standard process as it was a transitional year following the adoption of the new Articles. The membership could expect an election the following year, re-affirming that the Trust was and would remain a member-led organisation.

#### **5. Any other relevant business**

##### **5.1. Award of Honorary Life Membership**

The Chair awarded Dr Jon Barnes an Honorary Life Membership of the Trust, thanking him for his significant contributions both as a trustee and also in relation to his work on wildlife reserves.

##### **5.2. Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve – Duns Castle Estate**

A member of the Berwickshire Local Group had written to the Company Secretary expressing concern regarding the Trust's decision to withdraw from managing the Duns Castle wildlife reserve.

The Chair confirmed the Trust had a well-defined process for reserve acquisitions and disposals and this matter was scrutinised first by the Trust's Conservation Committee and subsequently at Council level.

Director of Conservation, Sarah Robinson, outlined the reasoning behind the decision to withdraw from the site, stating the process had been triggered by an inability for the Trust to manage the site in a way that was appropriate for wildlife, as well as a request for the Trust to take on the cost of annually surveying an onsite dam. The Local Group continued to be active on the site. She confirmed the Trust was committed to the protection of its wildlife reserves and ceasing to manage a site was an unusual occurrence.

The Chair confirmed that staff had written to the member directly and that the Reserves Manager for the area had undertaken to telephone them to ensure their concerns were addressed.

In response to a query, Alan Anderson, Head of Reserves provided further detail on the inability to manage the site in a way that was appropriate for wildlife.

As no notification had been received of any other formal business the Chair thanked all attendees for their participation and formally closed the Annual General Meeting.

**Footnote:**

*There followed short presentations by Jo Pike, Chief Executive and Alison Smith, Chair, Central Borders Local Group.*

*The Chair then invited questions on any aspect of the Trust's work. Subjects discussed included the Trust's response to the climate emergency and the trend of falling public funding, membership statistics, local planning, communication strategies and the global climate strike*