



Registered Charity No. 501384

Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society AGM 2022

Held at the Study Centre, Low Hay Bridge on Saturday 23rd April 2022

Minutes of the Meeting

In the Chair: Robin Cope

In attendance: 41 members of the Society.

The meeting was opened at 3pm by Roderick Smith, President of Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society (HBNRS). He welcomed the Trustees of the John Strutt Conservation Fund (JSCF) and members of HBNRS to the 47th AGM of the Society and explained the proceedings of the meeting.

Apologies: Apologies were received from 13 members of the Society.

2019 AGM Minutes: These were approved as a true record of the 2019 AGM.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the 2019 AGM minutes.

Chairman's Report: I would like to start by thanking the Committee for all the time and work that they have given to the Society. This has been of real benefit to the Reserve and my thanks to all of those who have volunteered their time and who have worked to make the Society successful. While the Covid pandemic has reduced our activities and restricted access to the Reserve, a good indication of the work of the Society is recorded in the newsletters sent to members over the last few years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have been involved for getting the Society to where it is today.

Treasurer's Report: All present had received a copy of the report showing an end of year balance of £31,000. Two accounts have been closed so that all monies are now held in one account. It was noted that donors include individuals that have made donations and former members who cannot be contacted but continue to pay less than the individual subscription rate. It was noted that as the Treasurer is also the Membership Secretary, a 10% turnover of members equates to a large workload.

The meeting approved the annual accounts.

JSCF Report: Helen Loxam, as a JSCF Trustee and Society member reported that Covid lockdowns had resulted in wildlife becoming more visible. After lockdown restrictions were relaxed the pressure of more people in the valley changed the behaviour of the deer. The stags, who usually retreat to the hills, stayed with the hinds which had not been observed before and maybe because of the number of people in the areas they usually move to.

Works carried out on the Reserve included: Wet meadows - plug planting in Pool Meadow, Newlands, Wetlands, Crooked Dale, and Low Moor Wetlands. Thank you to the volunteers who did the work, Cumbria Wildlife Trust for the administration and Plant Life for the funding. Dry meadow - Low Moor regeneration with seed from Little Lands. Hedges - Hulleter track planted 2015 has been very successful and was laid this year. New hedge around Limed Assey Syke which was paid for by the Society.

Storm Arwen: Over 70 trees were blown over mostly very large oaks. Those on roads and walls have been dealt with, others have been left and are still growing which will result in some interesting phoenix trees in the future. 3 hides were blown over.

Latest developments: Limed Assey Syke and Great Assey Syke are pastureland and have been largely overlooked for conservation enhancement until now. This area has had 6 ponds dug, one of which will be called the Society Pond and will be used for pond dipping. It is hoped that the pasture will be managed to promote woodland pasture. An area of the pastures which includes Tissie's Memorial and tree will be called Tissie's pasture to recognise the 50th anniversary of the society (2021).

Education: Wings school visit each week and do volunteering work. 5 schools are booked in over the next 2 months. Cumbria University used the woods for assessing their students on an outdoor education module. Mind in Furness sends groups monthly.

Raised Bog survey: Bernie and the Natural History group were thanked for their twice monthly surveys and the annual vegetation survey. It is hoped to include members in more surveys e.g., Species specific surveys for which there would be training given.

Any Other Business: The Future relationship with the JSCF

Roderick Smith, President HBNRS, stated that there was a lack of volunteers to keep the committee going and voiced the opinion that this is becoming common among community groups and that, in this area, this may be due to the increase in holiday cottage ownership. Roderick was confident the JSCF had similar aims and objectives to those of the HBNRS, that they have the capital for the future and as they are the landowners it makes sense to dissolve the HBNRS and pass on the assets to the JSCF.

Jane Chaloner, Trustee HBNRS, described growing up, visiting Hay Bridge and the development of the Reserve from a preserve for the Furness Red Deer in the 1950s through to Tissie Fooks' vision of the reserve for education and wider access for the public. Jane believed the JSCF has the energy for further developments that a band of volunteers cannot generate and she fully supported the move to dissolve HBNRS in favour of the JSCF.

Robin Cope proposed the motion that the Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society be dissolved and the Trustees on confirmation of the Resolution, proceed immediately to release the assets of the society and, after discharge of liabilities, donate the residue to the John Strutt Conservation Foundation for the purpose of conservation and education on the Hay Bridge Nature Reserve.

Chris Berry seconded the motion.

Before the vote was taken there was an opportunity for any questions. These were:

Q. Would there be any changes to the membership fees?

A. Helen Loxam answered that membership will change to a direct debit system and that an internet platform will be used to organise membership and fees. In addition, there will be more events and use of the Study Centre and events will be booked online. A Facebook group will be used to spread news and reports will be on the website. An annual newsletter will still go out to members who do not have internet access.

The motion was read again and passed unanimously by a show of hands with 41 members present and 13 proxy votes in favour.

Robin Cope then proposed that, since there was an outright majority in favour of the motion, the meeting should also approve that there was no need for an additional Special General Meeting as laid down in the Society Constitution.

Seconded: **Andrew Sykes**

The meeting approved the motion and so no Special General Meeting will be held.

Robin Cope thanked everyone for attending and supporting the proposals which will make it easier to move forward.

Roderick Smith then thanked the Chair.

There was no further business.

The formal part of the meeting was then ended at approximately 3.35pm.