



## The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales

Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held at the Parc Slip Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 12.00

There were 41 members present including 6 Trustees, and 10 members of staff.

Rob Pickford, Chair, opened the AGM by welcoming everyone to the meeting. A walk had been planned for the end of the meeting but due to dire weather conditions this would be unlikely to take place. He went through the various 'house-keeping' notices.

He handed over to Sarah Kessell, CEO for a round-up of the year (April 2017 to end March 2018) (the presentation is available to view on our website). Sarah spoke about the conservation work being done including return of grazing animals to Overton Mere, the strong population of Brown Hairstreak butterfly at West Williamston, the red squirrel project and the Trust's newest nature reserve Llyn Fach. There's been a strong focus on marine wildlife with a large HLF project. The Trust's strategic work continued with attendance at a variety of meetings ensuring that the natural environment gets proper protection. Our visitor centres had a successful year with increasing visitor numbers and fundraising work including the promotion of the importance of legacies was carried out. The latter half of the year was taken up by the work surrounding the merger with Brecknock Wildlife Trust.

There was an inspiring presentation by Gina Gavigan, Marketing and Development Manager and Laura Evans, Living Seas Wales Project Officer based at Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre. This was about the preparation and delivery of the Heritage Lottery Funded Living Seas Wales project; a joint project between WTSWW and North Wales Wildlife Trust (the presentation is available on our website).

In regard to the marine plastic problem, there was a question about the use of plastic in the Trust visitor centres. It was noted that the Trust has switched to paper disposable cups, paper straws and offers free water refills and now has milk delivered in glass bottles rather than plastic. It is looking at alternatives for the plastic water and soft drinks bottles sold.

The Trust works with other organisations such as Keep Wales Tidy and Surfers Against Sewage for the beach cleans and works on beaches that do not have other management by larger organisations such as National Trust.

A member queried whether the Trust has engagement with fishermen. The Trust works with fishermen in New Quay and although this could be controversial the Trust aims at positive engagement and most fishermen want to have a healthy fish population for the future.

There was a short break followed by the raffle draw. Thanks were given to everyone who supported the raffle by buying tickets.

The formal part of the AGM started.

### **1) To receive apologies for absence**

Barry Downes, John Ramsey, Shirley Fowler, Susan Sear, David Gardner, Lynne Berryman, Roger Bray, Shirley Matthews, Mike Alexander, Rob Anthony, Nick Pollock, and Peter Hunter

### **2) To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2017.**

These were proposed as correct by Lucy Tusa and seconded by Trevor Theobald and agreed by all present.

### **3) Chairperson's report**

Rob Pickford reiterated the points he had raised in the annual report regarding the decline in biodiversity and the challenges and uncertainties for the future for wildlife conservation. He noted that this is a period of significant change with legislation governing conservation having its origins in the EU. The Trust's ambition is for nature to recover – noting we are nature and not separate from it, and this is crucial. The Trust's membership has grown and so has its impact – across the UK there are over 800,000 members. Rob noted that it was particularly good to see so many WTSWW members attending the AGM which shows the level of commitment.

Rob thanked Trevor Theobald who finished his term of office as a WTSWW Trustee and he has been a Trustee since WTSWW started and with Wildlife Trust, West Wales before that. He has also been Chair of the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee providing the link between the Trust and the committee. We are grateful to Mike Alexander for taking on the role of Chair of Islands Conservation Advisory Committee.

Thanks were also given to Ian Thomas who has served as a Trustee for the last five years and is standing down early due to work commitments. In his role as Chair of the H&S committee, his help has been invaluable in progressing some vital areas.

Thanks also to Lynda Hickling who has moved away from the Trust area. Lynda was a Trustee from 2004 to 2012 and had been a member of the East Carmarthen Local Group and after moving further west became a stalwart of the South Pembrokeshire group. Lynda was also a dedicated volunteer in other ways, assisting the staff in the offices with a wide range of valuable tasks including the time consuming data entry involved with the Skomer Gift Aid slips.

Rob paid thanks to Rosey Grandage and Mark Brian former Brecknock Trustees who had helped with the complicated business of the merger. They had been co-opted to the WTSWW Board last year and were up for appointment at this AGM.

Rob noted that Sash Tusa would have been standing down at this AGM at the end of his third term of office but the Board felt that it would be beneficial to maintain continuity and had spoken to the Charity Commission to let them know that Sash's term of office would be extended to enable the continuing work on the Brecknock integration to be done. The Charity Commission had been informed in writing of the Trustees decision.

Thanks were given to Sarah Kessell, CEO and her Senior Management Team (SMT), and all the WTSWW staff without whom the work of the Trust could not be done and for their dedication to the Trust that goes well and above their contractual obligations.

Rob gave thanks to the other Trustees for their energy and commitment, and to the Trust volunteers (over 600) for their hard work and for spreading the word about the Trust to family and friends. And finally to the members for their support, stating that unless people continue to make a commitment the Trust couldn't exist.

He handed over to Sash Tusa for a financial presentation (the presentation is available on our website) . Sash thanked Margaret Drury, Finance Manager and Marie Lindley, Finance Officer for their great work. He added that this Trust is managed tightly and managed well for members so that money is available for conservation work.

He thanked John Gale for his commitment to the Trust and who had been on the Finance committee since it had been set up and had also been Treasurer. He has been a tremendous support. The Finance Committee reports to the Trustees and helps Sarah and her SMT. Reduced grant funding had been a challenge to overcome and alternative funding streams sought. It is also a challenge to have financial reserves set aside.

Sash went through the presentation and noted that the deficits in income for our charitable activities have been balanced by an increase in trading income – i.e food in visitor centre, sales goods and island accommodation. This income directly benefits our conservation work.

There was a question from a member regarding trading income from the islands and whether this could be increased. Sash said that Lockley Lodge sales make the majority of the surplus and that there are excellent retail staff working there. He added that the Board had discussed the islands which are saturated by day visitors (NB fixed visitor numbers to protect the wildlife and habitat), and Trustees have to balance out the impact on wildlife and the stress on staff. The numbers of visitors cannot be increased but there are opportunities for those that don't make it over to the islands to go on one of the round-island boat trips organised by Dale Sailing. Any increase in income would involve some difficult discussions. Following an additional query it was noted that the Trust does not own the boats that go over to the islands but only gets income from the landing fees, which have increased over the years but the Trust is mindful that the islands must continue to be accessible for people.

A query was raised regarding the graphs in the summary account and nearly £300K of funds expended to raise approximately £90K of fundraising income. It was clarified that due to the way charities have to comply with accounting procedures that involve other aspects being included in the fundraising expenditure eg membership staff, and management of people working on getting grants and other activities, that this can look misleading. This was acknowledged and accepted although Margaret Drury offered to explain in more detail to the individual member after the meeting.

#### **4) To receive the annual audited accounts and reports for the financial report ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018**

Members were all in favour and no objections.

#### **5. To re-elect the following to the Board of Trustees: Spencer Gammond, Alexis Kirsten and Shirley Matthews**

This was proposed by Lucy Tusa, and seconded by Mark Brian. All were in favour.

#### **6. To elect the following co-opted Trustees to the Board: Mark Brian and Rosey Grandage**

This was proposed by Spencer Gammond and seconded by Sally Weale. All were in favour.

#### **7) On recommendation of the Board, to elect the following to the Board: Stuart Bain, Gillian Berntsen and Richard Payne**

This was proposed by Sash Tusa and seconded by Spencer Gammond. All were in favour and all the above were duly elected.

**8) To confirm the re-appointment of the auditors**

It was proposed by Sash Tusa that Broomfield & Alexander be re-appointed and this was seconded by Lucy Tusa.

**9. Questions from members**

There were no further questions.

The AGM closed at 1.50pm and Rob Pickford thanked everyone for attending and wished them a safe journey home.