

Bittern Countryside Community Interest Company

Old Station Building, Station Road, Arnside, Cumbria LA5 0HG



Minutes of the Tenth Annual General Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Friday 23rd March 2018 at RSPB Leighton Moss Visitor Centre, Silverdale.

Before the main business meeting Ann Kitchen introduced Robin Horner, Area Manager, RSPB. He presented an RSPB perspective on Working for Wildlife within the AONB with partners including the AONB. This included examining the water catchment regime at Leighton Moss; developing ecological networks to enhance wildlife; getting the most benefits for wildlife and the local economy from tourism and improving and extending areas of wetland including proposals for Warton Mires.

The main business meeting followed after a short break.

1. Present and Apologies

Present: Shareholders: Ann Kitchen (Chairman), Ken Kitchen, Fiona Allan, David Askew, Bob Pickup, Roger Walton, Natalia Walton, John Webb, Heather Rhodes, George Steele, Robin Horner, Bob Hamnett, Roger Cartwright, Nancy Cartwright, Mike Smith and Jeanette Smith.

Apologies were received from: Stephen Kirtley, David Player, Ian Henderson, Liza Henderson, Val Stevens, David Farrant, Barbara Hall, Ray Anslow, Liz Anslow, Kate Schofield, Elizabeth Richards, David Barton, Mary Hamilton, Sue Briscoe, Leslie Edkins and Margaret Bromley-Webb.

2. Minutes of the last AGM and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 23rd March 2018 were agreed as a true record (Proposer: R Walton; Seconder: J Webb). The Minutes were thus duly signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

3. Chairman's Report on Company Activities

The Chairman began by welcoming all our shareholders old and new. The following points were made (in brief):

The Solar PV Initiative: This is continuing albeit with a few problems. Storth School our first solar school in 2012 has generated over 20,000kwh. The solar panels from the Leeds Children's Holiday Centre (now demolished) were donated to the Wildlife Oasis. The Solar panels at the AONB offices are working well and have generated over 10,000kwh since they were installed in 2015. The Silverdale School panels had to be removed and put into storage because of a leaking roof. Hopefully this issue will soon be resolved.

We are currently looking to help the four schools that have not received help under the Solar PV scheme to lower their lighting costs. A pilot scheme at the Arnside Football Club has been very successful and we will look to roll this out more widely.

The Parish Signboard Project: This started with Arnside Parish Council and is bearing fruit under the aegis of the AONB. Each parish is being offered help with the design and production of the boards. Arnside, Storth and Beetham boards are now up and Silverdale are just starting.

The Silverdale District Woodbank: This thriving membership scheme is helping local wood owners manage their woodlands in exchange for any surplus wood. This initiative is worth supporting as it enables waste wood to be used and as many of the members have young families; collecting wood brings them out into the countryside.

Wildlife Atlases: These continue to sell well at the RSPB cafe and at events. From each copy sold, 50p is donated to RSPB funds which have meant that a total of £530 has come to us in the last 12 months. We have recently agreed to let the AONB Landscape Trust sell the Atlases through their new web shop.

The Arnside/Silverdale AONB Red Squirrel Strategy: This initiative is continuing with the support of all the major landowners in the area including some funding from the BCCIC. It is encouraging to note that far fewer Grey Squirrels are being reported in the area worked by the project and there have been five reports of sightings of Red Squirrels in the summer of 2018.

Plastics in the Environment: We are looking to see if we can work together with others to reduce the use of plastic in our locality. Val Stevens has produced a leaflet showing how to replace plastic with more sustainable alternatives. This is now on our website. Financially we remain on a sound footing and we have managed to further many of our aims. We always welcome suggestions from our shareholders as to further possible initiatives.

Web Site: This is now run by A2A, a local business. It has allowed us a lot more flexibility than before. If you have any ideas for other things that could go on the site please let us know. Also if you would like to get involved in this side of our work we would love to hear from you.

David Farrant has had to retire as a director. We would like to thank him for all the work he has done for the Company. He was one of the original directors who got the whole thing started. We therefore have vacancies for directors. We would like to hear from anyone who is interested. They could be co-opted any time in the coming year. I am vice chair of the AONB Executive Committee of the AONB and the BCCIC can continue to support the work of the AONB team in many other ways.

Thanks are due to all our board and especially Mike, our secretary, David, our Treasurer and also Barbara and everyone at the AONB office.

4. Report of the Finance Director and Presentation of Accounts

The Treasurer circulated summaries of the full Financial Statement that has to be sent to the Regulators. The full statement will be available on the website. He introduced the statement by saying that for last year (to September 30th 2018), the Company had made a loss of £1496 and that shareholders' funds stood at £9,686 compared with £11,182 at the end of the previous year, a sum that was close to its capitalised value. The Company would thus have no Corporation Tax to pay. The loss was mainly accounted for by extra administrative expenses such as the setting up of the new web site.

5. Approval of Accounts.

Approval of the statement was proposed by Fiona Allan, seconded by Bob Hamnett and approved by a show of hands.

6. Re-appointment/Election of Directors

The Directors retiring this year were Mike Smith and Ann Kitchen. Both indicated their willingness to stand for re-election. Their re-election was proposed by Fiona Allan and seconded by Roger Cartwright. The elections were agreed by a show of hands.

7. Any Other Business

The Chairman mentioned the 'Feel Good about Wood' booklet produced some time ago and now out of print. It was intended to update and reprint the booklet covering costs either with donations or a cover price. She also mentioned that the AONB were making a leaflet available on 'Dementia Friendly Walks' within the AONB.

R Cartwright mentioned that a meeting was being held the next day at Silverdale's Gaskell Hall to provide a platform for local societies and to discuss any issues in the village.