

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 Helen Rawlinson who gave an illustrated talk on a project called 'Back on Our Map' that will investigate the feasibility of reintroducing species to the Morecambe bay and South Cumbria area that have become extinct locally or regionally. The initial year of the project would be gathering information on the status of a range of plant, mammal, bird, butterfly and other insect species and assessing the various factors relevant to their re-introduction or recovery.

The talk was well received and was followed by questions and discussion. Helen distributed a questionnaire about the project and individual attitudes to wildlife and nature.

The main business meeting followed after a short break.

1. Present and Apologies

Present: Shareholders: Ann Kitchen (Chairman), George Steele, Roger Walton, Natalia Walton, Val Stevens, Malcolm Stevens, Peter Standing, Martin Elsworth, John Webb, David Barton, Heather Rhodes, George Steele, Robin Horner, Bob Hamnett, Ray Anslow, Liz Anslow (Landscape Trust), Roger Cartwright, Mike Smith, Jeanette Smith and Ken Kitchen.

Others: Craig McCoy (National Trust), J Elsworth.

Speaker: Helen Rawlinson (University of Cumbria).

Apologies were received from: Francis Astor, Philip Pacey, Stephen Kirtley, Kate Schofield, Liz Richards, Mary Hamilton, Fiona Allan, David Farrant, Allan Rhodes, Sue Briscoe, David Askew and Margaret Bromley-Webb.

2. Minutes of the last AGM and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 10th March 2017 were agreed as a true record (Proposer: Val Stephens; Seconder: Bob Hamnett). The Minutes were thus 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 shareholders and others to the meeting. She outlined activities that the Company had been engaged in during the financial year 2016-17.

Following its closure and acquisition by Holgates, the solar panels on the Leeds Children's Holiday Camp had been removed and given to the Wildlife Oasis where they are now installed. The Silverdale School panels had generated 13,000 kWh during the 4 years they

have been installed. Currently these panels have been temporarily removed and stored to allow for repair works to the flat roof. Panels on the AONB Office have generated 7,000 kWh since their installation. The Solar PV booklet has been updated and the revised version is on the website. Unfortunately, the level of Feed-in tariff received is now much lower than previously.

A number of schools in the AONB were not helped as they did not have suitable roofs to install solar panels. Thus the Company has been offering to pay for the installation of LED lighting in these schools. Two schools have expressed interest. LED lighting has been installed at Arnside Football Club with help of a donation of £572 from the Company. The Parish signboards project initiated by the AONB is progressing. The Company have offered to donate £100 towards the design, construction and installation of panels for each of the six parishes. The first panel was installed at Arnside Station and has been welcomed by visitors. Beetham parish has recently been finished (2017) and Silverdale will soon be receiving its panels.

The Silverdale and District Woodbank is thriving with as number of young families taking part in the collection and distribution of fuel from the local woods. The Wildlife atlases are still selling well, a total of 320 being sold since the last AGM. The Company is also providing the funding to keep the birdfeeders at the AONB Office supplied. The Company is also supporting the Westmorland Red Squirrel Initiative and has offered financial support this year of £1000.

The Chairman is continuing to serve on the AONB Executive Committee.

The company would welcome any suggestions as to initiatives or new directions that it might follow. The Company will consider in which way it might be involved with the work of the Silverdale Sustainability Group. For example we could put information on the website and/or work with them to produce a booklet on reducing plastic use and waste.

The Company's website is now run by A2A. It has been grateful for the support of the AONB in hosting its website since the Company's inception, but it was felt that the Company needed fuller control of its content and also had better and faster access. Any ideas for the improvement of the new website would be most welcome.

4. Updated Business Plan

AK introduced the revised draft Business Plan for the period 2018-22. She made clear that while the Company are unlikely to activate all the areas of work or initiatives set out, the plan will act as a framework to enable the Company to fulfil its aims and objectives throughout this period. R Walton proposed the Plan be adopted. This was seconded by Val Stephens.

5. Report of the Finance Director and Presentation of Accounts

In the absence of the Finance Director, A K distributed a spreadsheet of expenditure and income from October 2016 to the current date. The Finance Director had also made draft copies of the Company Accounts available for inspection. This was also displayed on the interactive screen.

AK mentioned that during the year £6,000 had been transferred out of the Coop Bank account pending more clarity on its future viability. This was subsequently returned when the regulator approved continued operation of the Bank.

The Accounts report that the balance on the current account at year end (30 Sept 2017) was £11,198. From this £16 was deducted as falling due to a creditor within one year, making a net value of £11,182. In the year with a turnover of £6,369, the Company had made a profit of £2,776 compared with a profit in the previous year of £998. The cumulative losses are therefore now reduced to £28. Deducting this from the Paid-up share capital of £11,210 confirms the value of the Company is now £11,182.

6. Approval of report and Accounts.

With Ken Kitchen as proposer and Malcolm Stephens as seconder, the draft accounts were approved. This was agreed with a show of hands.

7. Re-appointment/Election of Directors

The Directors retiring this year are Bob Hamnett and Roger Walton. Both have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election. This was proposed by Ann Kitchen and seconded by Peter Standing. The prospective new Director, Val Stevens was proposed by Ann Kitchen and seconded by Heather Rhodes. The elections were agreed by a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business

Val Stevens offered her thanks to the Chairman and said that she considered the project well worth backing. Bob Hamnett mentioned that in relation to the 'Back on Our Map' project, attempts had been made in the past to establish whether the dormouse was present in the AONB. None had been found. It would be helpful if any information held by individuals on this or other target species should be passed on to the project. Roger Cartwright thought that adders and grass snakes were also species that should be looked at.