

Minutes of the 87th Annual General Meeting 2023

2:45pm, Thursday 31st August 2023
Ingestre Orangery
Stafford
ST18 0RF

Present: Steve Anderson (Trustee), Philip Atkins (Vice-President), Alan Bloor (Haywood Society), Annette Bloor (Haywood Society), Mary Booth (Trustee), Brian Broome (Haywood Society), Pat Broome (Haywood Society), Sarah Burgess (Office and Publicity Manager), His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire Mr Ian Dudson (President), Chris Emsley, Dave Evans (Trustee), Claire Geoghegan (Hedgerow Heroes Project Manager), Christine Hill (Haywood Society), Steve Hopkins (Trustee), Mohammed Khuram (Chairman), Cllr Ant Reid (Stafford Borough Council and Eccleshall Parish Council), Paul Windmill (Planning Advisor), Anna Woolliscroft (Trustee).

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Hannah Clendon, Sue Kneill-Boxley and Stephanie Thompson.

2. Minutes of the 22 September 2022 Annual General Meeting

There being no questions, approval of the minutes of the 2022 AGM was proposed by Steve Anderson and seconded by Mary Booth.

3. Chairman's Report

Mohammed Khuram summarised CPRE's work over the past year to protect, promote and enhance the countryside. CPRE Staffordshire was successful in its bid for Phase 3 Hedgerow Heroes funding from national CPRE and Claire Geoghegan was introduced as the new Hedgerow Heroes project manager. The calendar photography competition, stargazing night, Green Schools Trophy and sponsorship of an award in the Best Kept Village Community competition have all aimed to promote the countryside. Steve Anderson and Anna Woolliscroft, who are stepping down as trustees, were thanked for their dedication to CPRE.

In response to a question from Cllr Ant Reid about the Hedgerow Heroes project, Claire Geoghegan confirmed that there is scope for hedgerow planting at sites other than those already visited.

4. Presentation and adoption of the 2022-23 Statement of Accounts

The accounts for the 2022-23 financial year had been prepared by the honorary treasurer, Sue Kneill-Boxley. There being no questions on the accounts, acceptance was proposed by Anne Clendon and seconded by Ant Reid.

5. Presentation and adoption of the 2022-23 Annual Report

There being no questions, the annual report was proposed for approval by Mary Booth and seconded by Philip Atkins.

6. Ordinary resolution to elect a President

His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire Mr Ian Dudson was re-elected President, proposed by Dave Evans and seconded by Philip Atkins.

7. Ordinary resolution to elect a Vice-President

Philip Atkins was re-elected Vice-President, proposed by Dave Evans and seconded by Ian Dudson.

8. Ordinary resolution to elect a Chair

Mohammed Khuram was re-elected Chair, proposed by Steve Hopkins and seconded by Dave Evans.

9. Ordinary resolution to elect a Vice-Chair

Mary Booth and Anne Clendon were proposed as Vice-Chairs by Dave Evans and seconded by Ian Dudson.

10. Ordinary resolution to appoint an Honorary Treasurer

Sue Kneill-Boxley had notified the trustees of her wish to resign as Honorary Treasurer. Chris Emsley was appointed the new Honorary Treasurer, proposed by Mary Booth and seconded by Steve Hopkins.

There being no objections, the 'en-bloc' re-election of the trustees (Philip Atkins, Mary Booth, Anne Clendon, Steve Hopkins and Mohammed Khuram), was unanimously approved by the members present.

11. Ordinary resolution to amend the constitution to reduce the frequency of executive committee meetings from six to four per annum

Mohammed Khuram proposed amending the constitution to reduce the number of executive committee meetings from six to four per annum. All members present voted in favour of this amendment.

12. Any other business

The 2024 AGM will be held at Blithfield Hall on 7th September.

Paul Windmill gave a brief update of planning issues around the county. Lichfield District Council has delayed its Local Plan after having decided it is not fit for purpose. South Staffordshire Council is waiting for clarification on government policy. Nutrient nitrification policy is set to be changed because it is holding up development. Mohammed Khuram said that CPRE Staffordshire will raise these issues with the West Midlands Regional Group and mentioned the possibility of organising a pre-election hustings with other organisations.

Cllr Ant Reid noted that Stafford Borough Council's new Local Plan is behind schedule. In Newcastle-under-Lyme, the Baldwins Gate development was allowed on appeal, despite it overruling the Local Plan and being located outside the settlement boundary. It is therefore important Local Plans have robust policies to avoid losing control over where new housing is located, or there will be no grounds for an Inspector to refuse a proposal. Paul Windmill noted that five-year land supply remains an important issue, although the Secretary of State appears to have abandoned it.

Ian Dudson mentioned the Green Tree Badge for children, launched on 4th September with the aim of working with 1 million schoolchildren from all backgrounds. Defra's coronation living heritage fund will distribute £2.5 million to local tree-planting projects to mark the coronation.

The meeting closed at 3:10pm.