

CHESHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
61st Annual General Meeting
Jodrell Bank Observatory
Saturday 9th November 2024, at 10.30am

Present: Felicity Goodey (President)
Bill Stothart (Chair)
Jamie Richards (Treasurer)
Charlotte Harris (CEO)

7 staff members

104 members attended including 10 Trustees (representing 64 memberships*)

*1 vote per membership so the maximum number of votes available on the day was 64

WELCOME BY CHAIR BILL STOTHART

Bill welcomed all the members to AGM and gave an overview of the event including confirming that the meeting was quorate. Bill explained that only members are able to vote and there is one vote per membership. Voting card were issued to those eligible upon arrival.

INTRODUCTION BY FELICITY GOODEY, PRESIDENT

Felicity Goodey welcomed all the members present and thanked everyone for coming.

Our President opened the meeting by reflecting that the past year has been a difficult one for wildlife, with a continuing lack of political leadership on the nature and climate crises. This makes the work of Cheshire Wildlife Trust, its members, partners, and staff more important than ever.

Warm thanks were offered to all who support the Trust. Membership continues to grow, reaching a record 17,705 last year and now on course to exceed 20,000 – a clear sign of the strength and urgency of our shared commitment.

The scale of the challenges we face is stark: intensive farming continues to erode habitats, with widespread losses of wildflower meadows and hedgerows, while insect numbers are falling at an alarming rate, threatening food security. Greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution and long-term declines mean Britain has now lost more than two-thirds of its wildlife, leaving the UK among the most nature-depleted nations in the world.

Yet there is hope. COP28 recognised, for the first time, the link between food security and environmental health. The Trust is leading locally – restoring habitats, employing farm advisors to support regenerative practices, and inspiring communities to value wild places.

Members were encouraged to act: write to MPs, support campaigns, and question food supply chains. Together, we can make the difference our planet urgently needs.

Felicity officially opened the AGM at 10.56am

1. MEMBERS PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from members for absence.

1 apology was received from Trustees (John Roscoe)

Voting slips were received in advance from 20 members

2. MINUTES OF THE 60th AGM (11th November 2023)

The President asked those members present if there were any factual corrections to the minutes of the 60th AGM; there were none.

She then proposed that the minutes made available in advance on the CWT website were a correct record of the proceedings.

The President reminded the audience that only members could cast a vote then asked the members to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record

Proposer: Bill Stothart

Seconder: Charles Neame

Felicity invited members to vote.

84 votes in favour (including 20 by proxy)

0 abstentions

0 votes against

Motion carried and the minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record.

3. REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Felicity handed over to Jamie Richards, Treasurer and reminded members that the accounts have been available on CWT's website in advance of this meeting. No questions relating to the figures in the accounts were received in advance.

Report by Jamie Richards, Treasurer:

The Treasurer reported that the financial year ending 31 March 2024 was another successful one for Cheshire Wildlife Trust, with continued growth and financial sustainability. Total income rose to £3.5m (2023: £3.2m), largely due to increased grant funding, and the Trust achieved its eighth consecutive annual surplus, this year £84k. Year-end cash remained steady at £1.6m, reflecting funds held for long-term projects.

Grant income is now the largest source at 45% of total income, rising 42% to £1.6m, with support from National Lottery Heritage Fund, Biffa, Natural England, and others. Earned income accounted for 33% at £1.16m, while membership subscriptions increased 5% to £533k, despite cost-of-living pressures, highlighting strong public support. Income from appeals fell to £94k following last year's successful 60th anniversary campaign, and legacy gifts contributed £57k.

Over £3m was spent on charitable activities. Salaries rose by 6% to £1.9m, reflecting investment in staff for new projects, while support costs fell to £499k. In total, 85.6p of every £1 was spent directly

on charitable objectives, and almost all expenditure (99.3%) remained within Cheshire. For every £1 of membership income, a further £5.64 was generated.

Thanks were extended to all funders and supporters

Jamie handed back to Felicity to deal with any questions of which there were none.

Felicity proposed that the Report and Accounts for the year to 31st March 2024, together with the Auditors' Report thereon be received and adopted.

Proposer: Jamie Richards

Seconder: Charles Neame

Felicity invited members to vote.

84 votes in favour (inc. 20 by proxy)

0 abstentions

0 votes against

Motion carried and the accounts for the year were adopted.

4. RE-ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Felicity explained that we have 2 Council members standing for re-election under the articles of association.

Charles Neame is standing for re-election to a further term of 3 years under Article 3.5.

Felicity proposed that Charles Neame be re-elected for a further 3 years under Article 3.5.

Proposer: Stephanie Sanderson

Seconder: Jamie Richards

Sarah Henshall is standing for re-election to a further term of 3 years under Article 3.5.

Felicity proposed that Sarah Henshall be re-elected for a further 3 years under Article 3.5.

Proposer: Charles Neame

Seconder: Claire Swarbrick

Felicity invited members to vote.

83 votes in favour (inc 19 by proxy)

1 abstention

0 votes against

Although not formally part of the AGM business, members were asked to note that Steve Judd is retiring under Article 3.5. Felicity noted that Trustees and staff would like to extend their thanks to Steve for his valuable contributions during his time on the Board and in particular for his role as Treasurer.

5. ELECTION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Felicity explained that We have 4 co-opted Council members standing today for election of their first term under Article 3.3.

A bio for each of the candidate Trustees has been available on our website in advance of the meeting. All four co-opted Council members are present today (ask them to make themselves known). Jennifer and Megan were co-opted late in 2023 and narrowly missed out on standing at last year's AGM. Sajid and Stephanie were recruited earlier this year.

The resolutions are as follows:

1. That Jennifer (Jac) Dennington is elected under Article 3.3

Proposer: Bill Stothart

Secunder: Charles Neame

2. That Megan Argo is elected under Article 3.3

Proposer: Sarah Henshall

Secunder: Rebecca Collins

3. That Sajid Javed is elected under Article 3.3

Proposer: Bill Stothart

Secunder: Sarah Henshall

4. That Stephanie Sanderson is elected under Article 3.3

Proposer: Claire Swarbrick

Secunder: Rebecca Collins

Felicity invited members to vote.

82 votes in favour (inc 18 by proxy)

1 abstention

1 vote against

(18 proxy votes in favour and 1 abstention received in advance for each candidate. There was one vote against Sajid Javed.)

The proposal was carried by the vote and therefore all three are duly elected for 3 years.

Felicity congratulated the new Trustees and welcomed them formally to the Board.

6. ELECTION AND REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

Felicity asked that members officially re-appoint Mitchell Charlesworth as the Trust's Auditors for a further year, with their remuneration to be decided upon by Council.

Proposer: Jamie Richards

Secunder: Stephanie Sanderson

Felicity invited members to vote

84 votes in favour (inc. 20 by proxy)

0 abstention

0 votes against

Motion carried and the President confirmed that Mitchell Charlesworth had been reappointed with their remuneration to be decided upon by Council.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6 questions were received in advance. Three were dealt with in the AGM and the remainder were put to the panel during the post AGM discussion.

A member asked how long Mitchell Charlesworth have been auditors. Jamie confirmed that is has been long time so the Board would take an action to review their position.

Two members asked, about the Trust's position on the Mersey Tidal Power Scheme.

The CEO shared the Trust's position statement on the scheme (published October 2024), summarised as follows:

The Trust highlighted the UK's commitment to protecting biodiversity and preventing wildlife decline. The Mersey Estuary benefits from triple legal protection—international, European, and national—reflecting its global importance for wildlife.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust emphasized that the nature and climate crises are interconnected and must be addressed together. While supporting a rapid transition to renewable energy, the Trust stated that a tidal barrage across the River Mersey would not be an appropriate solution. Current proposals risk causing serious harm to irreplaceable, legally protected habitats and could breach international agreements.

The Trust is calling for a coherent approach to climate action that fully recognises the value of nature and the services it provides to society. Any loss of protected habitat is unacceptable, and the Trust will oppose schemes that result in such destruction.

A member asked which other wildlife organisations the Trust is working with to complete our vision? The CEO explained the CWT works in partnership with a wide range of organisations, most notably other Wildlife Trusts across the UK, stakeholders involved in the Local Nature Partnership and Local Nature Recovery Strategy programme and with community groups based in Cheshire.

There were no further questions from the floor and Felicity encouraged anyone who had a question at a later date to contact the Trust.

8. Volunteer of the Year Award

Felicity explained that the Volunteer of the Year Award is **the highest accolade for volunteering** given by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. The award is given in memory and inspired by the contribution of Eric Thurston, a long-standing volunteer for the mid-Cheshire group, who provided inspiration to many others over the years. This year the award was given to Jeff Pinnington.

Jeff Pinnington has been volunteering with the Membership Recruitment Team for over 10 years, with his upbeat and positive attitude. Jeff has helped the Face-to Face membership team develop by offering helpful suggestions and ideas. Many people are now supporting Cheshire Wildlife Trust to bring nature back because of Jeff's commitment to volunteering.

Jeff also has an excellent knowledge of the environment and is very happy to pass his extensive knowledge on to others. In his downtime he takes people out for nature walks and encourages them to support Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The membership department is a more productive and a richer environment by having Jeff as a volunteer. He has created a lasting and positive impact on nature by encouraging people to support the Trust who perhaps hadn't given nature much consideration before. His commitment to the role includes always having a magic trick in his pocket to entertain the children and has even been known to dress up as Father Christmas over December.

He can always be relied upon to have a friendly smile and help others wherever he can. With his happy and engaging manner, Jeff brightens everyone's day no matter what the weather.

Jeff was present to receive the award.

9. Formal Closure

Felicity declared the formal business closed at 11.30am.

The AGM was followed by a presentation on the Trust's highlights from the year and three presentation highlighting projects supported by CWT's work. The speakers along with staff from then CWT took questions from the audience on a wider range of topics.

After the event members enjoyed the remainder of the day at Jodrell Bank exploring the exhibitions, telescope and grounds.