

MINUTES OF THE 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 18th October 2025, 10:30 to 12:00 o'clock via Zoom

Present:

Lisa Pinney (LPi), Chair of Trustees [Chair]
David Green (DGr) Vice Chair of Trustees
James Larnar (JLa), Treasurer
Eamon Mooney (EM), Secretary
Clare Chapman (CCh), Trustee
Katie Foxton (KFo), Trustee
Joe Moran (JMo), Trustee
Alex Nicholson-Evans (ANE), Trustee
Waheed Saleem (WSa), Trustee
Fiona Adams (FAd), Member
Philip Beardmore (PBe), Member
Graeme Muirhead (GMu), Member
Martin Smith (MSm), Member
Nicolas Crombie (NCr), Member
Philip Harper (Pha), Member
Margaret Sherward (MSh), Member
Rosemary Jill McGee (RMc), Member

Apologies:

Alex Johl (AJo), Trustee
Denise McLellan, Trustee
Ramandeep Nijjar, Trustee
Rosemary Morris, Member
Jack Daniel (JDa), Trustee
Richard Holmes (RHo), Trustee

In attendance:

Delia Garratt (DGa), CEO, Ex-Officio
Dan Brown (DBr), Deputy CEO, Director of Fundraising and Engagement
Norman Dandy (NDa), Director of Nature Recovery
Hana Chatwin (HCh), Director of Finance
Sarah Frost (SFr), Head of People and Operations
Jane Dominese (JDo), Senior Governance & Administration Officer [Secretariat]

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 The Chair, welcomed attendees, confirmed that there was a quorum present and opened the meeting at 10:34.
- 1.2 The Chair reminded Members that the meeting was being recorded and invited DGa to introduce the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Thanks were extended to the SLT for their work, in advancing the Trust's ambitions for a wilder Birmingham and Black Country, and for their individual contributions to the production of the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 1.3 Apologies **WERE NOTED**.

2. RESOLUTION 1: MINUTES OF THE 42nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (19th October 2024)

- 2.1 The Chair asked those Members present if there were any factual corrections to the minutes; there were none.
- 2.2 Following a poll to confirm the minutes were an accurate record of the AGM of 19th October 2024, **IT WAS RESOLVED** the minutes **be approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

4. **RESOLUTION 2: ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 2025 AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

- 4.1 LPi introduced the agenda item, highlighting achievements in habitat restoration and nature recovery, particularly in the Dudley and Walsall areas, through support from the West Midlands Combined Authority and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Staff, Members and Volunteers were thanked for their valuable contributions to the Trust's work.

There being no questions on the Trustee's report, JLa was invited to present the Treasurer's report.

- 4.2 JLa opened by thanking HCh for her work, particularly the timely returns to the Trust's Auditors, commended her on a clean audit and presented the financial report.

- The Statement of Financial Activity was presented, showing income, expenditure, and investment outcomes.
- Targeted expenditure had been agreed to advance the Trust's objectives.
- The Balance Sheet position was strong with a balance exceeding £800,000, ensuring operational stability for several years.
- Reserves were reviewed in line with accounting standards, maintaining at least nine months of operating costs.
- Fixed assets were also detailed.

Funds were explained as follows:

- **Restricted Funds:** Linked to specific projects or funders.
- **Unrestricted Funds:** Available for general use and core operations.
- **Designated Funds:** Allocated by Council for future specific projects.

The Trust's auditors, Luckmans Duckett Parker Ltd, had confirmed that the accounts were materially correct and compliant with UK GAAP, the Companies Act 2006, and the Charities Act 2011.

Questions were invited. There being none, Members were asked to vote on the adoption of the Annual Report and accounts.

RESOLVED: The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2024 were adopted.

5. **RESOLUTION 3: APPOINTMENT OF TRUST AUDITORS**

- 5.1 Members were asked to officially re-appoint Auditors, Luckmans Duckett Parker Limited, for a further year and for their remuneration to be decided upon by the Council.

The Members **APPROVED** the motion.

- 5.2 The Members **NOTED** the intention to initiate a tendering process for the appointment of Auditors during the course of the current financial year.

6. **RESOLUTIONS 4-6: RE-ELECTION OF TRUSTEES**

- 6.1 In handing over the agenda item to the Secretary, the Chair conveyed the Members' and Trust Council's thanks to Joseph Moran, who was stepping down, for his contributions to the Council, the Trust's work and, in particular, the Young Trustee ambassadorial work he had carried out on behalf

of the Trust. His conservation skills and experience and his involvement in Trustee recruitment were also noted.

- 6.2 EMO explained that Trustees were appointed for a term of 3 years with the option to be re-appointed for a further term. The following Trustees were proposed for re-appointment for a further term:

- Alexandra Nicholson-Evans
- Mohammed Waheed Saleem and
- Jack Daniel

RESOLVED: Members were asked to vote by poll on the appointments, and they were approved.

7. RESOLUTIONS 7-10: RE-ELECTION OF TRUST COUNCIL OFFICERS

- 7.1 The Secretary outlined the election process and explained that the Articles of Association stipulated that the Trustee Officers were to be appointed on a yearly basis. The Council had endorsed the re-appointment of the current Officers and proposed them to the Members for re-election. They were:

Chair: Lisa Pinney MBE
Vice Chair: David Green
Treasurer: James Larner
Secretary: Eamon Mooney

RESOLVED: The Members approved the re-election of the nominated Trustee Officers.

- 7.2 LPI shared that, due to the imminent end of the second term in office of several Trustees, Council would be recruiting for new Trustees.

Thanks were extended to the Vice Chair for his contributions to the Council's work and for his leadership of Trustee recruitment. He, in turn, asked Members to share the upcoming opportunities with relevant contacts that had links to the local community and the West Midlands region.

- 7.3 LPI thanked Members and Volunteers for their continued and invaluable support, acknowledging the challenging financial environment, the importance of their contributions and thanked them for their continued support of the Trust's work.

The formal meeting closed at 11:03 and moved to the informal business

8. ADDRESS BY DR DELIA GARRATT

- 8.1 The CEO reflected on the past year, noting it had been a period of resilience, growth and impact despite continued financial pressures. The Trust had demonstrated adaptability and determination, continuing to invest, evolve and deliver meaningful outcomes for both people and wildlife across the region.

She celebrated some of the past year's achievements and set out areas of focus for the coming year.

The key highlights:

- **Dudley's Path to Nature Recovery:** supported by the West Midlands Combined Authority, allowed the Trust to restore 10 sites across the borough, improving woodlands, wetlands and heathlands and engaging the local community in a programme of activities.

As part of the programme, a citizens science initiative, the Birmingham and Black Country invertebrates' group, was launched.

- **River Rea Restoration:** significant progress had been made across the river Rea, including the removal of 3 weirs and reconnecting stretches of the river, restoring natural flow and fish spawning ground.
- **Purple Horizons and Wild Walsall:** these projects aimed to reconnect the fragmented landscape, counter biodiversity loss, address climate change and improve access to nature contributing towards a growing national nature recovery network.
- The Purple Horizons partnership received funding from Natural England to reconnect heathland and restore habitats between the two largest nature reserves in the area, Sutton Park and Cannock Chase.
- **Education and Engagement:** the team had continued to engage with schools at EcoPark and the site was now at capacity for children's engagement.
 - New engagement activity in Walsall had taken nature learning directly into classrooms.
 - Climate cafes were engaging young people in urban nature events. The Nature Stewards model had seen creative community leaders blending art, culture and ecology together.
- **Membership Recruitment and Communications:** activities were summarised. Fundraising activity was also outlined and also the Trust's investment in a new fundraising officer which was allowing the trust to develop new funding pipelines.
- **Funding and Investment:**
 - A National Lottery Heritage Fund grant had been received to support the Wild Walsall project, which would allow the Trust to carry out habitat restoration of vital habitats, such as globally rare lowland heathland, and to connect people to natural resource on their doorstep.
 - In addition to this funding, in-year match-funding had been secured for the project which would allow transformative work in that space.
 - The National Lottery Heritage fund also awarded funding for a resilience project which would allow the Trust to complete master-planning activities for land management, operations and enable future planning work.
 - The Championing Nature project, supported by The All-England Lawn Tennis Club and Emirates, and in partnership with three other Wildlife Trusts, was illustrated. The 7 year, £7Million project, of which the Trust would receive £1.4Million, would allow it to grow its community education and engagement outreach work across the most nature deprived parts of Birmingham. It would prioritise schools with the least access to green space and would allow a year-round plan of nature focussed outreach events and an overhaul of the Trusts environmental centre, Centre of the Earth.
 - The Trust had invested in a new conservation officer to support the growth of Corporate Volunteering.

Looking ahead, it was clear that gardens were a crucial element of delivering the Trust's goal of 30% of land put into recovery for nature by 2030. Even more so due to increased pressure

on land across the region from proposed development, and potential impact of the proposed planning and infrastructure bill.

To address these challenges the Trust had increased investment in Planning with the development of new roles, and active engagement with local authorities as they develop their Local Plans. The Trust had also been supporting local planning enquiries.

The Trust had also focussed on its advocacy work and participated in a Restore Nature Now rally in London, actively engaged in the 2024 general election and participated in the West Midlands Combined Authority's inaugural Natural Environment summit in Birmingham.

Thanks were extended to Staff, Trustees, Volunteers, Members, Funders and Supporters.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 The Chair read a comment from Jack Wilson, former Trustee and Chair, that had been submitted in advance of the meeting:

"I have discussed with a couple of former chairs of B&BCWT their views on whether they believe an in-person AGM would be useful. All three of us think it would be beneficial to have an in-person AGM to improve dialogue between members, trustees and staff.

An in-person meeting would also allow more informal discussions to take place which are not really possible with an on-line format. Perhaps it would be useful to have in-person every alternate year with on-line in between?"

LPi thanked Mr Wilson for forwarding his observation and confirmed that the matter was regularly reviewed by Council. In-person meetings had not been attended very well previously, and Council were committed to either holding an in-person meeting next year or to hold a Members' day to facilitate dialogue and discussions.

- 9.2 She thanked Mr Wilson for his suggestion and shared a second question he had submitted.

*"Does Birmingham's designation as UK's first Nature City:
a) have any impact on Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and
b) present any opportunities for the Trust?"*

DGa noted the City's recognition was a positive development, highlighting Birmingham's commitment to becoming a greener, healthier and happier city and acknowledged the key contribution of the City of Nature Plan development work.

Opportunities for the Trust from future investment in the area were anticipated, although potential challenges were also identified.

- 9.3 A question had been received from Nicolas Crombie, former Trustee.

"There are two major regeneration projects planned for Birmingham. One at Druid's Heath and also in Ladywood. The Ladywood proposal is supposed to be the biggest housing regeneration project in Europe but so far, we haven't heard much about Nature.

How can the membership of the Trust and local people influence these changes in the interests of nature, and can we use the newsletter to keep members and local people informed and thus maintain pressure on the authorities and developers?"

DGa responded that challenges pertaining to planning and the Government's intention to remove perceived barriers through potential reforms to the planning system had been addressed earlier in the meeting. It was recognised that the Trust would be required to navigate these forthcoming changes while continuing to offer support to Local Authorities wherever possible.

In respect of specific development projects, it was reported that constructive dialogue had commenced with developers to encourage the creation of plans which placed nature at the centre of design and promoted nature-rich communities.

It was further noted that additional work in this area was planned, which would contribute directly to Goal 2 of the Trust's strategic plan.

The mobilisation of members through future communications, including via the Trust's newsletter, may be required to support these initiatives.

9.4 A supportive comment had been received from Rosemary Jill McGee (Jill)

"I will attend if I can, but I just wanted to let you know in case I can't that I really support all the brilliant work the Wildlife Trust does and thank you for all that work!"

The Chair thanked her for her comment and responded that it would be shared with colleagues across the organisation.

9.5 Questions were invited from those present.

9.5.1 Fiona Adams commented:

You've not mentioned the City Nature Challenge at all. I find it a really good way of talking to people while I am taking photographs.

I am not very good at getting other people to get involved but I wish I could, and I wish you could all do more to get people involved because I find it lasts all through the year, it doesn't just at that weekend at the end of April.

It makes you more observant and you go on noticing aspects of wildlife all through the year as a result.

DGa thanked Fiona Adams for her comment and agreed that the ongoing engagement inspired people to connect with nature close to them. Suggestions for continuous engagement were invited.

An explanation for the data variation post-event was given.

9.6 LPi extended her thanks to everyone who had supported the Trust in delivering the wide range of work that had been illustrated during the meeting. The practical difference, real outcomes and increased engagement with nature within local communities were acknowledged as both inspiring and motivational.

The growing recognition of the role of urban trusts, the importance of collaborative working, and the contribution such collaboration made to community cohesion across wider society were also celebrated.

Particular reference was made to the diversity of communities across Birmingham and the Black Country, and to the increasing number of communities with which the Trust was engaging. The tangible positive impacts on the ground were recognised, reaffirming the significance of the Trust's ongoing work.

- 9.7 The date of the next AGM would be advertised in the Trust Magazine in due course. Due consideration as to whether an in-person meeting or online meeting and separate Members event would be given.
- 9.8 There being no further questions or comments, those present were thanked for attending and the meeting closed at 11:45.

Minutes approved by:

SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME

DATE

MINUTES OF THE 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Saturday 18th October 2025, from 10:30 – 12:00 o'clock via Zoom

Postal Votes (Updated Agenda)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Abrahams Martin | 19. Khan Sarah |
| 2. Ahmed Susan | 20. Kilburn C |
| 3. Brookes Anne | 21. Lau Dee |
| 4. Burnett Wendy | 22. Leighfield S J |
| 5. Clueit Elaine | 23. Lloyd-Jones Richard |
| 6. Collingwood Angela | 24. McLellan Denise |
| 7. Collins Jill | 25. Mills D |
| 8. Curran G | 26. Patrick Jennifer |
| 9. Daniel Jack | 27. Ralph Elizabeth |
| 10. Elliott Brian | 28. Nijjar Ramandeep |
| 11. Eperjesi Frank | 29. Shanks Thomas |
| 12. Groves K. L. | 30. Smithson Heather |
| 13. Hardie Andrew | 31. Straker Welds Martin |
| 14. Hartley David | 32. Townley Fiona |
| 15. Hathaway Joanne | 33. Wilde Paul |
| 16. Holmes Richard | 34. Wilkes Colin |
| 17. Jones Alun | 35. Wilson Mark |
| 18. Kent Susan | |

Postal Votes (First Agenda)

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ahmed Susan | 7. Lawlor C&T |
| 2. Charles Elinor | 8. Marsh P |
| 3. Eperjesi Frank | 9. Moore Yvonne & Peter |
| 4. Green David | 10. Pitcher John |
| 5. Hollis Brenda | 11. Smithson Heather |
| 6. Hubbard Jennifer | 12. Townley Fiona |