

**Cornwall Wildlife Trust  
Annual General Meeting  
held via Zoom under the provisions of the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020  
on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

48 members were present.

Carolyn Cadman (CC), Chief Executive of Cornwall Wildlife Trust, opened the AGM at 10.00am and welcomed all present. CC made a note of Zoom etiquette, specifically how the meeting will be conducted and the process for voting, noting that if any questions are raised, where possible these will be answered during the AGM. If not, questions will be considered at the next Council, February 27 2021.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Judy Ransley, Paula West, Canon G Almond, Dr JH Harvey, Helen Rawe

**2. Minutes of the AGM held on 16th November 2019**

The minutes were accepted as a true record and signed accordingly.

**Matters arising from the minutes of 16th November 2019**

None

**3. Carolyn Cadman (CC), Chief Executive, An Overview of Cornwall Wildlife Trust 2020**

CC gave an overview of the year in the life of Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT), presenting with slides, a recording of which can be found on the AGM page of the Trust's website,. A brief outline is below:

**December 2019**

- Attended the launch of Cornwall Council's Forest for Cornwall, their flagship carbon neutral project
- A landmark 100th monthly seal survey took place on Looe Island by 8 Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust and CWT volunteers.

**January 2020**

- CWT New Year celebrations included a game to design t-shirts which are now available to buy in our online shop
- The Your Shore Beach Rangers conference was held in Wadebridge celebrating the success of the project.

**March 2020**

- The last face-to-face staff meeting of 2020 was held at Ladock village hall
- Working from Home became the new normal requiring a rapid transition for everyone.

**Summer 2020**

- Many CWT nature reserves were closed during the first lockdown and we cancelled the Open Gardens programme
- The Cornwall Good Seafood Guide netted around 69, 000 new users over lockdown
- Helman Tor habitat restoration work that was undertaken last winter resulted in a plethora of wetland plants bursting into life and wildlife returning
- Our 'nature in lockdown' survey asked the public to share their experiences of nature in lockdown
- National Marine Week in July saw the first Marine BioBlitz which generated 468 records from 56 different contributors!
- Launch of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) pilots - Cornwall is one of five national pilots
- Izzy raised over £8000 from people buying cakes whilst cycling past on the Bissoe trail
- August saw the release of the artfully named 'Sigourney' at Cabilla farm, near Bodmin

- Natasha Collings Costello started as the new Managing Director for Cornwall Environmental Consultants.
- **September 2020**
- The Green Recovery Challenge Fund launch for 'shovel ready' projects - sadly recently heard that neither of our bids have been successful but we did receive nearly £50k from the National Heritage Lottery Fund.
- **October 2020**
- CWT launched an Autumn Seed Search Campaign with Cornwall Council asking everyone to get out and about in a Covid friendly way to collect tree seeds
- CWT held the first YouTube online event– Wildlife Matters – discussing badger vaccination
- **November 2020**
- CWT published results of the 'nature in lockdown' survey; nearly 3000 responses, with over 500 people sharing nearly 1500 photos
- Wilder Beef meat boxes sold out in record time
- BBC released two documentaries presented by Simon Reeve on Cornwall raising awareness of the pressures facing local wildlife and wild places
- The Local Nature Partnership Conference was held over three online sessions
- **December 2020**
- A smaller planning application than the one prepared for previous designs was submitted for the redevelopment of the Allet site.
- The Marsh Young Volunteer Award for Marine conservation was won by Laura Thornton
- Some unusual visitors turned up - a sociable plover and a humpback whale.
- Research revealed that seagrass beds in Looe Bay are up to ten times larger than those in Plymouth, Falmouth and Torbay
- An 'all staff' meeting was held via Zoom that actively discussed how to improve working from home

#### **To summarise:**

The importance of nature in all our everyday lives has grown, particularly the importance of nature on our doorsteps.

Prompted by Covid, we took the opportunity to do more work digitally than before, which has enabled us to reach new audiences online, and to reduce our costs and carbon footprint.

Sadly, we had to let some staff go, who we wish the best of luck in all that they do. Covid forced us to change our ways of working at short notice, and I'm proud of the resilience, innovation and commitment that our staff, volunteers and Trustees have shown in very difficult circumstances.

Finally, Covid has reinforced the importance and value of the relationship of Cornwall Wildlife Trust with what have proven to be a very loyal, understanding and passionate band of supporters and funders. Your ongoing support means we can continue to help Cornwall's wildlife and wild places to survive and thrive - thank you.

#### **Stephen Warman, Chair of Council, Reflections of 2020**

What a year ...

There have been high spots as well as lows. A recent high was when 2,500 people, in responding to our recent Nature in Lockdown Questionnaire, reminded us why we are here!

The WAY we work has been challenged and possibly changed forever by COVID.

The CONTEXT in which we operate is being transformed by:

- A volatile political climate, at home and abroad
- By high profile campaigns drawing attention to worldwide extinctions & Climate Emergency
- And by the re-wilding agenda that stretches expectations of what nature conservation is all about

Some campaign Groups use methods known as 'Respectful Disruption'

We haven't chosen this route. Our modus operandi remains one of building constructive partnerships with those who can help bring about change, so we work with:

- The business community - for example through the TEVI project
- With farmers and our Water Authority - as in our farm advice and the Upstream Thinking programme
- With young people - As in Your Shore Beach Rangers. A programme that shares skills and knowledge to improve local coastal environments.
- We also work with those, like Cornwall Council who build strategies for Cornwall and we take part in The Cornwall Local Nature Partnership to help integrate environment, health & wellbeing, education and economy

Nature Reserves remain critical to our conservation effort. We have recently overhauled our strategy for acquiring land to allow to help rebuild a better-connected landscape in which wildlife can move, survive and flourish in the face of threats. That also gives us potential to promote appropriate afforestation as part of a Cornwall-wide approach to tree-planting to absorb carbon and to protect natural systems.

We are embarking on a new strategy to prepare us for such change.

All of this requires effort and support. To our Members for showing your commitment to Cornwall's natural environment; to all of our employees; to our very many volunteers and to charitable donors; I would like to extend, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, my sincerest thanks.

#### **4. Addresses by Officers of the Trust**

##### **President: Nick Tregenza**

I am sure we're all very aware of how huge the impact of climate change could be, and I am only going to pick up two points, relevant to the work of CWT, here.

The first is the very valuable, and fortunate, synergy between increasing natural carbon capture and nature conservation. So many of the actions we might take to increase biodiversity, and to extend at least partly wild areas for wildlife, also increase natural carbon capture. The re-introduction of beavers is a particularly spectacular and delightful example with layer upon layer of vegetation being quietly laid down in newly swampy areas buzzing with life. It's a joy.

Another synergy is that natural carbon capture needs land and time. We have a half-century plus record of holding land in conservation ownership. Us older members of CWT are aware that we did live without regard for our carbon footprint, and we've only recently understood how drastically the consequences of that freedom that we had will be visited on people from Bangladesh to the Arctic for decades to come as well, as on the planet's wildlife. For us there is a very clear link – we may be able to use part of whatever wealth we can leave as a legacy to CWT for these purposes, so that it will go on pulling carbon out of the atmosphere long after we have gone. And carbon atoms are so numerous there will already be carbon atoms that came out of my car exhaust in 1970, in bark that is being munched by beavers in Woodland Valley Farm right now. So do give your legacy a thought.

The second is the appointment of Craig Bennett as Chief Exec of the Wildlife Trusts nationally. I've joined two web meetings he has run about nature conservation issues. I really learned from the clear and deep understanding he put across on how change actually happens and how to actually achieve change, and I came away feeling inspired and motivated – a refreshing thing in these times. Many of us in CWT have felt that the Trusts were punching below their weight at a national level on at least some key issues. Now, at this crucial time, that is really changing, so do listen out for Craig Bennett – your time will not be wasted listening to him.

We are voting later on 4 new trustees. We have 7 stepping down, the highest number ever. That has come about from a new rule limiting the term trustees serve. I'd like to give you an idea of what they have been up to:

- Liz Tregenza has worked hard on financial governance but back when a very small Cornwall Naturalists' Trust was trying to fund our first staff member, she ran a county-wide sales operation. For some time, it owned a caravan that we bought not knowing that after gruelling days at an agricultural fair it would regularly reveal a fatal attraction for soft mud.
- Phil McVey has brought us valuable experience from across Europe on organisational issues and worked hard on those. Our governance is now at an all-time high.
- I rather think of Caroline Vulliamy, I know she won't mind, as a kind of third lobe on the corporate brain, keeping us in touch with historic and archaeological issues in the far east of the county, and perspectives we might have missed.
- Daniel Eva I first met when he led me into a mine down a treacherous scree slope of illegally tipped waste with literally industrial quantities of broken glass. It was rapidly blocking access by horseshoe bats to their underground roost. We fixed that one and he's fixed many more issues for the Council of CWT as our totally-on-top-of-the-job Hon Secretary.
- John Gowenlock was formerly an anaesthetist and I see him as quietly speaking very well-chosen words into the ear of a not-always-perfectly receptive patient. Especially on our nature reserves. Thanks, John.
- Dave Thomas has been hugely active on conservation issues with an earthy determination rooted in local knowledge and he has absolutely represented the heart and soul of the movement. If 1% of world were Dave Ts our problems would be solved
- Jean Smith has a long history of work on education and especially the formation of Fox Club. I often think that education looks like the slowest route to change but often turns out to be the fastest and the immense impact of Greta Thunberg, who must be one of our all-time heroes, is the most stellar example of that.

So, thank you all.

Vice President, Mark Nicholson (MN), gives a vote of thanks to Nick Tregenza

### **Honorary Secretary, Daniel Eva (DE)**

Thank you all for attending our first virtual AGM. This was put in place as an emergency procedure to ensure compliance with the government regulations around the coronavirus pandemic. I hope that this will be the first and last virtual AGM that we hold, but just in case you will see that there is a special resolution on the agenda today which will enable us to hold meetings in this way in future, if it is necessary. I would urge you to support this resolution.

This will be my last address as Honorary Secretary after nine years in the post and this year has certainly been the busiest and most turbulent. I know that members are concerned about the health of Cornwall Wildlife Trust in the current difficult circumstances and I hope that I can reassure you that going forward we are in a strong position.

Back in March, which seems a lifetime ago, the trustees moved swiftly to set up a Trustee Coronavirus Group, to address the challenges that we knew were coming. We met weekly at first and then subsequently fortnightly to guide and support the staff in making some difficult decisions in keeping the trust functioning throughout the lockdown and afterwards.

If you were at the last AGM, you would have seen plans for the future redevelopment of our headquarters at Allet. One of the first decisions we took was to put this on ice, and we withdrew from the EDRF funding application. We are however, still proceeding with the planning application.

In June the trustees approved a COVID operational recovery plan which addressed the fact that the income that we anticipated had reduced and our ability to undertake key activities was constrained by social distancing rules.

This potentially could have produced a large hole in our finances, but the action plan has managed to stabilise tis by a mixture of furloughing staff and cost savings.

Thanks to the generosity of members and non-members alike in further legacy income we have now managed to fill this hole. I cannot stress enough what a difference legacies make to Cornwall Wildlife Trust in pursuing our charitable aims.

At last year's AGM I signalled that we would continue to acquire land for nature reserves. Despite the current turbulent year, I am pleased to say that thanks to the generous legacy of Elizabeth Ann Nicholas we have bought 23 acres at Helman Tor, 59 acres at Carn Glaze, 46 acres at Bartinney Castle and 71 acres at Truthwall Common. These acquisitions extend and join our current nature reserve network and will help in landscape scale conservation.

I hope that this reassures members that Cornwall Wildlife Trust is in a healthy state going into an increasingly uncertain future. Thank you very much for your support of a local charity that can get things done and really makes a difference for wildlife.

## **5. To consider the accounts and the reports of the auditors for the year ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Carolyn Cadman, Chief Executive (CC)**

CC noted that as Paul Coyne, Treasurer 2013 to 2020 stepped down in November 2020 and the election of the new Treasurer does not take place until later in the program, it is the Chief Executives position to present the summary of the accounts; and today this was presented with slides, a copy of which will go out with the minutes at the next AGM and will also be available on the AGM page on the Trust's website. As such, the summary is noted below in line with the presentation of the slides.

### **Slide 1 - Cover**

The following slides are extracts from our annual review and the full group financial statements for Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Cornwall Environmental Consultants Ltd.

The full reports can be found on the AGM page of our website: [www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/agm](http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/agm)

### **Slide 2 – Statement of Financial Activities**

This slide shows a summarised version of our Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020, with the previous year's figures also shown for comparison.

The current year's figures are split into Unrestricted and Restricted Funds. Unrestricted funds are given to support the Trust with, usually, no designation as to how they are spent. Restricted funds are given to the Trust for specific purposes, usually specified by the funders, for example conservation projects like the Your Shore Beach Rangers and Upstream Thinking projects currently running, amongst others.

The statement shows that the Group income for the year was £4m and expenditure £3.84m, giving a surplus of £160,885. This is as a result of a surplus of £499,802 in restricted funds, but a deficit of £ (338,917) in unrestricted funds. As a result, total Unrestricted Funds at 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 stood at £1.5m compared to £1.85m last year and Restricted Funds rose from £5.96m to £6.46m. When combined, our total funds are now almost £8m.

Overall expenditure is at a similar level to the previous year, however income is significantly lower. This is predominantly due to much lower levels of legacy income in 2019/20, approximately £1.3 million less than 2018/19, as shown on the top line. This is due to a mixture of an unusually high level of legacy income in 2018/19 and unusually low in 2019/20, compared to the average amount.

Of our expenditure for the year, if we exclude consultancy expenses as they relate directly to consultancy income, 85% of our expenditure was on Nature Conservation, with the remaining 15% relating to things like fundraising and publicity in order to secure future income.

### **Slide 3 – Balance Sheet**

The top line of the balance sheet summarises our Fixed Assets. These are things owned by the Trust, including all of our Nature Reserves which make up a large portion of the total of £4.35m. This is an increase on last year of almost half a million pounds and reflects our spending on new three new pieces of land, totalling 54 hectares, to extend our existing reserves at Bostraze, Caer Bran and Helman Tor, making them bigger, better and more joined up.

The next section shows our Net Current Assets £3.78m. This figure is arrived at by subtracting the 'Creditors due in one year' figure of £422,939 from the Current Assets figure of £4.2m. Creditors are defined as anyone we owe money to and are split into two sections, one being payments due within one year of the reporting date and the other being payments due in one or more years, for example long term loans or Hire-Purchase agreements. Current Assets are largely made up of debtors, being money owed to us but not yet received, and cash in the bank.

To arrive at the Net Assets figure we then subtract Creditors due after one year (£165k) from the combined totals of Fixed Assets and Net Current Assets and arrive at Total Funds of £7.97m, the same total as shown at the bottom of the Statement of Financial Activities.

The final section splits out the Total Funds figure on the bottom line into Restricted Funds and Unrestricted Funds. Unrestricted Funds are also split into three sub-categories, namely General Unrestricted Funds, Designated Funds and Revaluation Reserve. They are also broken down in the pie charts on the right of the screen, one for each of the last two years.

Designated Funds are pots of money that, although technically unrestricted, Trustees have set aside for certain projects and therefore shouldn't be spent on anything else unless undesignated.

The Revaluation Reserve reflects small gains or losses on investments over the years.

The General Funds are any unrestricted funds not already included in the other two sub-categories. These funds can be used for any purpose, in line with the Trusts aims and objectives. The loss in the 2019/20 financial year has reduced the General Funds balance to £284,844.

Looking ahead to 2020/21 our latest management account forecasts anticipate that we will at least break even for the year and perhaps even make a surplus which, given the year we've all had, is very welcome news!

**Proposed: Steve Crummay      Seconded: Ian Pye (IP)**

**The accounts were duly accepted by member vote.**

## **6. Resolutions**

The Hon Secretary presented the Resolution:

A Special Resolution put forward to allow the option of holding general meetings online. A copy was included with the AGM Notice which all members received, and it is also available on the website.

**The resolution was duly accepted by member vote.**

## **7. Questions from members**

Debbie Lambert: Other county wildlife trust groups have a very active education service (e.g. Devon and Essex) to support schools through a 'nature friendly schools' project, and I was wondering why Cornwall does not appear to be part of this process?

The Hon Secretary thanked Debbie for her questions and answered it as follows:

We know how important it is to engage and enthuse young people about wildlife so are keen to progress with ideas around this.

Our Your Shore Beach Rangers project which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and in partnership with Cornwall College has run from 2016 and completes in 2021. It has had an amazing impact, inspiring and encouraging young people to protect the marine environment.

In addition to supporting our unique network of Local Marine Groups (called the Your Shore Network), the Project engaged with nearly 20,000 young people within the ages 11 to 24 via the Beach Rangers Academy and our youth work within communities.

Recently, one of our Beach Rangers Laura Thornton won the prestigious Marsh Christian Award for young volunteer of the year 2020.

The Project recruited the first young apprentices in the history of Cornwall Wildlife Trust, two of which have gone on to excel working at Natural England (Adele Morgan) and for us within People and engagement (Jodie Holyoake). The third is still working with the team until autumn 2021.

The Project is leaving a legacy in its wake, having integrated young people into the Your Shore Network, and ensuring that the Beach Rangers Academy resources are open access and available for education providers to use into the future. It also drafted a Cornwall Wildlife Trust Youth Charter, to ensure that young people are a part of our future both in how we engage with them, and how they engage with us.

We need to review what the next Cornwall Wildlife Trust Youth strategy might look like.

This will need some planning and we will start by reviewing the Your Shore beach Rangers project and looking at some of the excellent, existing programmes being run by other Trusts.

Funding, resources and strategy are needed. So, we will be reviewing options and looking to take this forward in the near future.

#### **Further questions:**

CC thanked Dave Goves for his question “*What can you tell us about staff changes this year and impacts on interactions between CWT/ERCCIS and volunteers and groups?*”, noting that this will be considered at the next Council meeting, 27 February 2021 and posted on the AGM pages of the CWT website.

## **8. Elections**

NT took the Chair

#### **Members standing down this year:**

Daniel Eva, John Gowenlock, Jean Smith, Dave Thomas, Liz Tregenza, Caroline Vulliamy, Phil McVey

Again, thank you all for your service to the Trust.

#### **Election of Trustees to sit on Council:**

NT took the Chair

#### **Members standing for election:**

Fiona Wotton, Lucy Jewson, Stafford Sumner, Oliver Blount

The Trust is delighted to have these talented individuals standing. Their biographies are on the AGM page of the website, they bring a wealth of experience and expertise with them from various sectors.

#### **All members were duly elected**

### **Members standing for re-election as Trustees to sit on Council:**

Charlie David and Gill Saunders

### **Both members were duly elected**

All were individually elected via a poll voting option, approved and duly elected.

### **Election of Officers of the Trust:**

DE took the Chair

#### **President**

Nick Tregenza was elected in 2019 as President is willing to continue and I commend him to you again as the President of Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

There were no other nominations.

Proposed: Stephen Warman    Seconded: Dee Reeves    Approval: Yes

### **Nick Tregenza was duly elected by member vote.**

NT took back the Chair

#### **Vice President**

Mark Nicholson was elected in 2019 as Vice-President is willing to continue and I commend him to you again as the Vice- President of Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

There were no other nominations.

Proposed: Frank Howie    Seconded: Karen Burrows    Approval: Yes

### **Mark Nicholson was duly elected by member vote.**

#### **Honorary Treasurer**

I would like to thank Paul Coyne who is stepping down from this role having been Treasurer since November 2012. Thank you for all your dedicated years of service Paul and we are very pleased to have you staying on as a Trustee.

Oliver Blount is willing to stand as Treasurer

There were no other nominations.

Proposed: Dee Reeves    Seconded: Paul Coyne    Approval: Yes

### **Oliver Blount was duly elected by member vote.**

#### **Honorary Secretary**

Again, I would like to thank Daniel Eva who is stepping down from this role and as a Trustee after many years of service. Thank you, Daniel, you will be missed.

Gill Saunders is willing to stand as Honorary Secretary

There were no other nominations.

Proposed: Mark Nicholson    Seconded: Charlie David    Approval: Yes

### **Gill Saunders was duly elected by member vote.**

GS takes the Chair

## **9. Appointment of Auditors**



GS said how very happy she is to have to been elected Hon Sec and that following on from Daniel means that I shall have big boots to fill - but I'm looking forward to my new role. As Daniel mentioned earlier the Trust is in good shape and despite the challenges that COVID has thrown up we are well set up to plan for a positive future.

Gill Saunders recommended that Robinson Reed Layton be appointed as auditors for the coming year.

**Robinson Reed Layton was duly appointed by member vote with no abstentions.**

## **10. Any other business**

None

GS closed the formal part of the AGM and handed over to NT for the closing remarks:

- Thank all for your continuing support
- Every legacy, financial or environmental, no matter how small or big, is vitally important, please give thought to yours
- We wish all a very peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.
- This concludes the 2020 AGM for Cornwall Wildlife Trust

**The meeting closed at**