



AGM Minutes 2018

Minutes of the National Trust's
124th Annual General Meeting,
held at STEAM Museum, Swindon
on Saturday 20 October 2018

Chair: Tim Parker
Present: Hilary McGrady, Director-General
Members of the Board of Trustees
Staff and some 300 members of the National Trust

1. Welcome

Tim Parker, the Chair, welcomed members to the National Trust's 124th Annual General Meeting. He thanked Trustees Carys Swanwick and Caroline Goodall who had stood down earlier in the year. He also thanked Tim Butler, the Solicitor, who was retiring in January 2019 after over 20 years' service, noting his key role within the National Trust. He introduced new Trustees Zarin Patel, Ade Rawcliffe and Caroline Kay.

The Chair made special mention of Hilary McGrady at what was her first AGM as Director-General following her appointment earlier in 2018.

The Chair explained how, in an increasingly uncertain world, the strategy 'Playing our part' focused on how to respond to some of the big challenges of the 21st century. The Trust continued to maintain, to the very highest standard, the properties in its care and to improve the quality of presentation of its houses, gardens, estates and landscapes. A record amount of almost £140 million had been spent on conservation in the last year thanks to the generosity of supporters. The Trust should be at the forefront of interpretation in the way it presented its houses and collections, and substantial investment in additional curatorial expertise would make this happen.

The Chair noted the difficulties of striking a balance between the competing demands of nature and people, between conservation and public access, and between the needs of the historic environment and modern society.

Climate change presented a major challenge, and the frequency and severity of extreme weather events had increased. The Trust was taking a long-term view, setting energy targets that combined the need to reduce energy use with the ability to generate its own renewable energy. To help achieve this, an investment of £30 million in a programme of renewable energy had been made, alongside a commitment to reduce energy consumption. The Trust was adapting to climate change by working with natural processes on the coastline to anticipate future changes and to encourage additional habitats for nature.

Meeting the needs of increasing visitor numbers and striking the right balance between conservation and public access were also big challenges. In the 1970s, approximately 250,000 thousand visits had taken place per annum compared to over 26 million last year.

A £100 million commercial loan facility was now in place which would be invested in buildings and infrastructure over the next five years to help deliver a high-quality visitor experience, while ensuring that membership fees were still spent on conservation.

The Chair highlighted the Trust's growing role in cities and the places where people live, as part of its strategy. The Trust was helping local communities to protect the historic buildings and green spaces that matter to them, finding innovative ways to manage places for a sustainable future. The Trust had collaborated with a range of partners working to protect public parks in Newcastle and finding a future for the Moseley Road Baths in Birmingham.

The Trust was founded to protect the places that the state could not. Historic sites in cities were at risk of being lost because there was no funding left to care for them. In the 20th century the Trust had taken on some of the nation's greatest 'at risk' stately homes from families who could no longer afford to keep them. In the 21st century the Trust was stepping

in to find solutions for industrial and other heritage under threat. These places underpinned the social fabric of communities. The Trust's expertise was needed today more than ever before.

The Chair noted the challenge of striking the balance between conservation and public access in the context of the previous year's resolutions. Trail hunting continued to divide the Trust's members. Hunting wild animals with dogs was outlawed in England and Wales by the 2004 Hunting Act, and National Trust land was no exception. However, the law permitted 'trail hunting' to continue, which created the sense of a traditional hunt but without the fox being chased or killed.

The Trust's 1907 founding Act set out that it would manage land for the benefit of public recreation. Some activities would not appeal to all, but everyone could enjoy the freedom to pursue their lawful interests on Trust land where they were consistent with the core purpose of conservation. The Trust had put robust rules in place to protect its interests and provide greater assurance that trail hunts on National Trust land were carried out legally and in compliance with licence terms. The Trust took allegations of unlicensed trail hunting seriously and would refuse, suspend or revoke licences where people did not follow the rules.

With regard to the proposed construction of a new tunnel to reroute the A303 at Stonehenge, the Trust needed to balance the duty to protect the rich archaeological landscape with the demands of modern society in working to secure the best outcome. The Trust remained engaged with Highways England but would only support a scheme that protected the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

The Chair emphasised that conservation remained the Trust's top priority and stated that it was investing more than ever in conservation. Noting achievements such as record visitor and member numbers, he stressed that the Trust would not become complacent.

In commending the 2017/18 Annual Report and Financial Statements, the Chair thanked members, donors, tenants, centres, associations, partners, historic families, staff and volunteers.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held in Swindon on Saturday 21 October 2017 were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chair.

3. Director-General's review of the year

Hilary McGrady, Director-General, thanked the audience for a warm welcome, stating that it was a privilege for her to address them for the first time as Director-General. She reflected on how growing up as part of a family living in Northern Ireland during the Troubles had influenced her, with activities connected with the arts and outdoors offering her an escape in difficult times.

The Director-General noted the importance of sustainability in the Trust and offered leadership through experience, resilience and a belief in the power of places to make a difference to people. She promised to deliver on the four key strands of the strategy 'Playing

our part' which were 'looking after places in the Trust's care', 'addressing the decline in nature', 'delivering great experiences' and 'engaging people in their heritage wherever they lived'. In addition, the Director-General stated her ambition to be the person who made everyone welcome to the Trust regardless of who they were or where they came from, extending its role in the nation's heart.

The Trust had 5.2 million members, but these were largely drawn from one section of the community which was not the intention of its founders. The Trust should provide places for people to reflect, to enjoy and celebrate their shared past. The history of our nation was something that everyone had in common. The Back to Backs property in Birmingham was an example of this, showing how its residents had lived through the decades. Transformed from a traditional presentation style, it now focused on stories of the hardships faced by women in 20th-century Birmingham. Visitor satisfaction had increased as they found it easier to relate to the story.

The Trust had supported Newcastle City Council in securing a new future for their parks by providing manpower and advice on how to set up a charitable trust. This ultimately meant putting places into the hands of people who felt the sort of ownership and passion that the Trust felt for its properties.

The Trust had stepped out of its role as guardian/owner into enabler. It needed to be more flexible and open, more sophisticated in understanding its audience, more grounded in research, more attuned to the historical significance of places and more committed to high-quality interpretation. The Director-General strongly disagreed with the view that this meant the Trust was dumbing down and reminded the audience that it remained rooted in brilliant conservation, the centrepiece of the National Trust's work.

Daily investment ensured properties were cared for and presented to a very high standard. Performance over the last year had been strong with an operating margin of 20.7% (£111 million). At £10 million more than budget, this enabled more conservation to take place.

Work to repair the roof at The Vyne in Hampshire had provided an opportunity for people to leave their own legacy by sponsoring a roof tile and leaving a message for future generations to find. Thanks to extraordinary fundraising efforts by staff and volunteers, restoration and repair work had taken place at Winchester City Mill, also in Hampshire, which had been badly damaged by flooding. This demonstrated that the Trust's work was about the people who cared and protected the places they loved.

Protecting and preserving were only part of the Trust's charitable purposes. The Trust was also about access. Places should be accessible and welcoming to everyone. An example of this was at Croome in Worcestershire where the Trust had worked in collaboration with children with disabilities and the charity 'Outside' to create a sensory experience map for the site called 'Potter and Ponder' to provide a more accessible visitor experience.

The main challenge for the Trust was to strike the right balance between the needs of people, farming and nature. Brexit had created a once in a lifetime opportunity to do the right thing for the environment, and the Trust was encouraging the Government to bring in legislation that would protect and improve it.

The 'Places Where People Live' programme has been established to help communities save places in the towns and cities where they live. Examples of the Trust's work were being part of the coalition to save the Moseley Road Baths in Birmingham, helping Burnley save its textile mills and working with Barnsley Council to secure a future for Grade I-listed Wentworth Castle Gardens.

The Trust's 'Green Academies' project was giving people the skills to look after their environment. It had supported 6,000 young people so far, and the Trust had 400 young people regularly volunteering with it as a result of the project.

The 'Recycled Teenagers' was a group formed after an intergenerational project between a local school and Hackney Caribbean Elders, to help people from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds enjoy and become part of Sutton House in London. The short-term project was so successful that it had become a permanent fixture.

The Director-General spoke about Neil Robinson, a volunteer photographer. In 2016, Neil was destitute and had nowhere to turn. The Trust had helped him, and Neil was now a mentor taking other photographers under his wing. His manager said, 'Neil has changed his own life through volunteering, but the amazing thing is he doesn't even realise he's changed the lives of many, many other people.'

The Director-General outlined her vision to engage more people willing to play their part in the National Trust and care for the places that mattered to them. She thanked everyone involved in the Trust's work for their support and in helping to achieve another record year.

4. Members' questions

A variety of questions was raised by members during the meeting.

What plans did the Trust have to improve accessibility at its properties in the future?

Hilary McGrady, Director-General, explained that progress had already been made and that the Trust would be investing more, with all properties expected to have a plan to improve access in coming years, even where historic considerations made it difficult.

Were any other companies considered before the recommendation of reappointing KPMG LLP as external auditor was made, what criteria were used to determine that KPMG was the best fit and could the voting booklet contain more information about that decision-making process so that members were more informed?

Peter Vermeulen, Chief Financial Officer, explained that KPMG had been selected following a thorough tendering process. The Audit Committee reviewed KPMG's performance after their first year in post and took informal soundings across the organisation to make sure that KPMG was effective and efficient. This led to the recommendation for KPMG's reappointment.

Had the Trust considered the spread of disease by hounds running from farm to farm as part of trail hunting?

Mark Harold, Director of Land & Nature, explained that Bovine TB was a big and complex issue. DEFRA had not expressed concern about spreading the disease in this way and it was, therefore, not something the Trust believed to be an issue. Farm tenants could withdraw consent for trail hunting on their land if they had concerns.

Would Google Street View be available for all properties in future as it was an excellent tool for those unable to visit properties.

John Orna-Ornstein, Director of Culture & Engagement, commented that virtual access of properties was being tested with various digital partners which he hoped would include exterior and interior virtual access.

Would the Trust would commit to stopping all use of single-use plastic items in its cafés by the end of 2019?

Sharon Pickford, Director of Support & Revenue, explained that the Trust had made a commitment in April 2018 to stop single-use plastic usage by 2022 because that was how long it would take to implement. In the meantime, the Trust offered free water to top up reusable cups at all cafés and had moved to compostable coffee and tea cups. The Trust's magazine was now sent to members in a compostable potato starch wrapper.

The intention of the petrochemical company INEOS to take the National Trust to court to force entry into Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire for seismic surveying with a view to high-volume hydraulic fracking was hugely concerning.

Mark Harold, Director of Land & Nature, reminded the audience that the Trust had confirmed its preference not to allow surveying for fracking or fracking on its land, based on concerns about the impacts of climate change on its properties from a conservation point of view. The Trust was in communication with INEOS with a court case pending. INEOS had recently visited Clumber Park to give the Trust more information about its proposals. The Trust had not commented, as it did not wish to prejudice the ongoing legal process.

Taking two questions which had been submitted before the meeting, the Chair reported that a member had proposed that there be more restrictions on dogs at National Trust properties and a different member asked why the National Trust continued to discriminate against well-behaved dogs and their owners by not allowing dogs into gardens.

Harry Bowell, Director of Operations & Consultancy, acknowledged the strength of feeling amongst members on this topic and recognised that, whilst decisions about access for dogs were made at property level, a more consistent approach was needed. The Trust had recently recruited a Dogs Project Officer to address these questions in a balanced way.

In light of good practice and transparency, why was the remuneration of the Executive Team not published by name?

Tina Lewis, Director of People & Legal Services, explained that remuneration had been published in line with guidance from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations.

The Trust's approach to collaboration was most welcome – what progress has been made with the involvement of local communities in decision-making?

Harry Bowell, Director of Operations & Consultancy, acknowledged that progress to date had been slow but that it would be an area of focus. The Trust had set up a forum in the Lake District to improve communication and the local community was involved in decision-making about the future of Wentworth Castle Gardens in South Yorkshire, working with Barnsley Council and Northern College. These examples illustrated the Trust's intentions.

The Chair read a question submitted before the meeting, asking how it could be the best year on record for the Trust when the 2017/18 report and accounts showed that the Trust had made a loss of £10.58 million this year against a profit of £24.34 million last year, and when targets had not been met for visitor satisfaction, energy reduction, fundraising and staff satisfaction.

Peter Vermeulen, Chief Financial Officer, explained that last year's profit was £30 million higher than this year because of two large one-off transactions comprising a lease buy-back of £20 million and a donation of £10 million. He added that not meeting targets was an indication of setting stretching targets rather than ones that would be easy to achieve.

Tina Lewis, Director of People & Legal Services, added that the changing of wording of questions in the staff survey, uncertainty due to Helen Ghosh's resignation and issues caused by the Prejudice and Pride programme at Felbrigg could be possible reasons for the drop-in staff satisfaction scores. Overall staff satisfaction was still high at 93% and 94% for the questions which had been posed.

How was the Trust preventing further deterioration of the Lansdowne Monument in Wiltshire and when it would be prepared to discuss what action could be taken with the local community? Why had the local community not been allowed by the Trust to fundraise for the restoration of the monument? A petition of 6,500 local residents had been signed and locals were willing to assist with the project and frustrated that no progress had been made.

Hilary McGrady, Director-General, explained that she had recently met with Lord Lansdowne to discuss this issue and would meet with the local community, acknowledging the Trust's responsibility for the monument but noting that its renovation was not currently a priority. No interim solution was available and it would take £2 million to restore the monument. The Director-General was keen to encourage independent fundraising, citing the Wellington Monument in Somerset as an example of where the community had carried out fundraising alongside the Trust. The Trust would prepare a considered response.

What was the Trust doing to increase diversity on the Trust's Council, given that the south of England dominated the candidates standing for election and the recommended appointing bodies had not included organisations from under-represented geographic areas?

Barbara Cooper, Senior Member of the Council, commented that she had been Chair of the Nominations Committee which had overseen the recommendations for election candidates. The vacancies had been widely advertised but there was room for improvement. The Board of Trustees was becoming more diverse, and this was the direction that the Council aimed to take. Members were encouraged to apply, as the Council was dependent on people putting themselves forward for election.

Might improving the quality of information provided by the Council encourage more applications?

Tim Parker, Chair, acknowledged that the work of the Council could be explained in better terms and committed the Trust to improving them.

Did the Trust have reciprocal visiting arrangements with the National Trust in America?

Justin Albert, Director for Wales and Trustee of INTO on behalf of the National Trust, explained that the Trust was part of an organisation called the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) which had a membership of 75 countries. The Trust had a reciprocal relationship with about half of them.

Why did some properties replace boxwood hedges with non-historically correct plants, and did the Trust look after its plant heritage in the same way that it looked after its property heritage?

John Orna-Ornstein, Director of Culture & Engagement, commented that the Trust's plant collections were as important as the collections inside its houses, noting that it held possibly the world's most important collection of living plants gathered from many parts of the world. Investment in the collections was significant. The Trust also owned a plant conservation centre. At property level the Trust aimed to balance the authenticity of plants with the use of the gardens, ensuring that they were durable and easy to maintain.

Why was the Trust not more transparent and proactive with its over-60s discounted membership category and how many over 60s had not been advised of the discount for senior membership for which they were eligible?

Sharon Pickford, Director of Support & Revenue, confirmed that since March 2018 members who were eligible to pay a lower annual subscription were being advised of this in their renewal letters. Members needed to be aged 60 or above, and to have been a member of the National Trust for five out of the last 10 years. Due to the age of some of its systems, not all records were complete in this respect, and members were encouraged to register online on 'mynationaltrust' to ensure that the details held about them were up to date.

Did the Trust have an ethical or moral policy for its investments?

Peter Vermeulen, Chief Financial Officer, responded that the Trust's ethical investment policy was published in the statutory accounts. He explained that the Trust carried out negative screening and did not invest in some of the worst polluting organisations. Within its investment portfolio the Trust had a large allocation with an Environmental, Social and Governance investment manager who was able to identify high-performing companies in this area. The Trust allocated £97 million to the Legal & General Future World Fund, which invested in organisations that made a financial return and improved their environmental conditions. The Trust always sought to achieve a financial return alongside a positive return for the environment as well as other principles that the organisation stood for.

Following the recent adverse publicity for Pret a Manger about food allergies, could the Trust provide reassurance that it had a plan to deal with any similar situation arising in its own cafés and restaurants?

Harry Bowell, Director of Operations & Consultancy, explained that food safety was taken extremely seriously, that new labelling would be issued imminently, and more information would be available at the point of sale at all outlets in the coming months.

After the Clandon fire, were sprinkler systems installed at more properties?

Hilary McGrady, Director-General, explained that the use of sprinkler systems was not commonly an appropriate solution due to the amount of damage that they could inflict. However, a substantial amount of work had been carried out to improve fire safety and protection across the Trust's portfolio.

How could the Trust justify building a cycle track around the Grade I listed park at Wimpole Estate in Cambridgeshire?

John Orna-Ornstein, Director of Culture & Engagement, acknowledged why this decision might have attracted criticism but explained that the cycle track would not damage the landscape or house in the long term. The decision was part of the Trust's aim of making its places accessible to more people.

If the Trust was for everyone, why was the Forest School at Toy's Hill being closed and what was the Trust doing to stop stag hunting on its land which continued despite being banned several years ago?

Harry Bowell, Director of Operations & Consultancy, explained that the Forest School was operating on a Site of Special Scientific Interest, that permission had been granted by the government's regulator, Natural England, to operate the school but that, regrettably, the terms of the licence that recognised the sensitivity of the wood were not being met. An alternative site for the school had since been identified.

Mark Harold, Director of Land & Nature, acknowledged that stag hunts were taking place and that a team was in place to monitor this and follow up on reported incidents. If there was conclusive evidence that there had been a trespass, the Trust could address the issue, but the size of the areas involved made it very difficult to police.

Were there plans to install a hoist in disabled lavatories to assist their use?

Hilary McGrady, Director-General, acknowledged the importance of Changing Places facilities, designed to allow people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, and other physical disabilities, space to use the toilets safely and comfortably, noting that they were currently installed at seven properties. She gave assurance that the Trust was committed to ensuring their inclusion in all future large-scale improvement projects.

Why had the Trust's historic support for farmers turned to efforts to remove farmers from their tenancies, reducing the number of sheep on the Lake District fells and changing the character of the area?

Mark Harold, Director of Land & Nature, acknowledged that there was more to do in building relationships in the Lakes. Mike Innerdale, Director for the North Region, was committed to listening to and understanding the views of local communities. These were changing times and the Trust's appreciation of the decline in nature had grown – hence its

current strategy. Climate change had brought drought and flood, disease and pests. Brexit meant that farmers were potentially facing a complete change in markets, standards and welfare issues and in the way public money was distributed. Against that backdrop it was vital to work together. As an example, the first Lakes Farming Forum had just been held which was about listening to each other, sharing ideas and finding solutions.

A member commented that the approach of the Trust in the Lakes had not been without fault previously and voiced support for the Trust's current approach, having witnessed its work first hand.

What was the Trust doing specifically to engage children whose parents or grandparents were not members of the National Trust?

Sharon Pickford, Director of Support & Revenue, noted that junior membership had been introduced for £10, which had been well received with a take-up of 20,000 in the first year. This was encouraging but there was more work to do in this area.

Why did the Trust's policy relating to trail hunting say that terrier men had no role in a trail hunt, and yet every trail hunt that the Trust licensed, was supported by terrier men? How did the Trust expect members to have faith in the credibility of a new monitoring system for trail hunts which consisted entirely of pre-announced checks when members had made clear their concerns that trail hunting and related activities were a cover for illegal hunting?

Mark Harold, Director of Land & Nature, responded that the Trust's monitoring would ensure where it could that terrier men did not enter Trust property, as this was not permitted. The Trust was keen to see that licence conditions were adhered to by all trail hunts operating on its property. An enhanced monitoring system had been introduced in 2018 which involved a dedicated team visiting trail hunts and taking random sampling of the scents used for laying trails.

How would the Trust balance its offer of an escape from congested life with increasing membership numbers?

Hilary McGrady, Director-General, reaffirmed that the Trust was 'for the nation' and that it was a question of finding balance, keeping tranquil spaces but also ensuring that there was more opportunity for people to connect with its spaces.

5. Adoption of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2017/18

The resolution to adopt the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2017/18 was proposed by Paul Boniface, the Secretary, on behalf of the Chair, and seconded by David Smart, Trustee.

The resolution was carried on a show of hands.

6. Appointment of the Auditor

The resolution to reappoint KPMG LLP as external auditor to the National Trust until the next Annual General Meeting was proposed by Paul Boniface, the Secretary, on behalf of the Chair, and seconded by Nick Stace, Trustee.

The resolution was carried on a show of hands.

7. Elections to the Council

Paul Boniface, the Secretary, announced the results of the ballot for elections of individuals to the Council and thanked all those who had stood. Nine candidates had put themselves forward for election.

The voting results were as follows:

David Haywood	18,745	
Sanya Sheikh	19,184	
Nick Stace	23,840	Re-elected
Elizabeth Staples	20,712	Elected
Duncan Mackay	21,889	Elected
Jane Dean	25,835	Elected
Leigh McManus	14,396	
Anne Casement	27,042	Re-elected
Paul Roberts	22,122	Re-elected

Paul Boniface, the Secretary, announced the results of the ballot for appointing bodies, elected for a period of six years, and thanked all those bodies which had stood.

The voting results were as follows:

Natural Resources Wales	11,560	
The Conservation Volunteers	24,692	Re-elected
Museums Association	19,530	Re-elected
Duke of Edinburgh's Award	24,091	Elected
Tenant Farmers Association	17,764	
RSPB	22,585	Re-elected
Historic Houses	19,883	Re-elected
The Women's Institute	17,385	
Royal Horticultural Society	27,141	Re-elected
The Arts Society	8,661	
Campaign to Protect Rural England	22,002	Re-elected
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	26,557	Re-elected
Soil Association	19,405	Re-elected
Country Land and Business Association	12,796	
Council for British Archaeology	19,732	Re-elected
Northern Ireland Environment Link	6,489	
The Gardens Trust	18,287	
Institute of Conservation: Icon	11,282	
Open Spaces Society	19,443	Re-elected
Peabody	4,328	
Ramblers	22,537	Re-elected
Royal Agricultural Society of England	12,095	
The Wildlife Trusts	28,809	Re-elected
Visit Britain	11,720	

Woodland Trust	31,552	Elected
Canal and River Trust	28,197	Elected
English Heritage	27,556	Elected
Association of Independent Museums	9,195	
Tenants Association of the National Trust	25,479	Re-elected
National Farmers' Union of England and Wales	22,717	Re-elected

8. Members' Resolution about the use of barbed wire on National Trust properties

We believe that barbed wire is an outdated product and that it causes injury to wild animals and people. We note that the National Trust makes much of 'nurturing nature' and 'helping wildlife to survive'. The use of barbed wire on National Trust properties is at odds with these two objectives.

A recent article in the *Henley Standard* reported on (with a photograph) the appalling incident of a deer being trapped and then dying in the barbed wire fence surrounding the National Trust property, Greys Court in Oxfordshire. The barbed wire was installed by the National Trust.

We invite members to agree that the National Trust should adopt the following policy on barbed wire:

- With immediate effect, the National Trust will not (nor allow its tenants) to install any new (or replacement) barbed wire on any of their properties.**
- The National Trust will implement a plan to have removed all barbed wire from their properties within five years.**
- Within that five-year period, the National Trust will identify higher risk sites (such as Greys Court) and remove the barbed wire immediately.**

The resolution was proposed by **David Sarson from Henley-on Thames** who, after warning, illustrated his point using two images of a deer caught in barbed wire at the National Trust property, Greys Court.

Mr Sarson expressed concern that the animal's carcass had remained in situ since its death in March 2018 and disappointment that the Trust had not installed a deer leap, despite their large presence and the death or injury of four deer during the last year. He explained that much of the barbed wire at Greys Court was in areas not used by livestock. The Forestry Commission had advised that barbed wire should not be used where deer were present, and the RSPCA supported this position. Mr Sarson was in touch with other landowners to encourage them to remove their barbed wire or replace it with plain wire, and in some cases, this had happened.

Alternatives to barbed wire included high-tensile steel wire with steel posts or electric fencing. Barbed wire was a cruel and outdated product and impacted other animals including dogs out walking. In many places barbed wire was being left lying on the ground due to rotten posts or fallen branches.

Mr Sarson expected that the National Trust's wildlife credentials would mean that they would be supportive of the position and that the Trust might research alternatives. He urged members to add their support in favour of the resolution.

The resolution was seconded by **Michael Sarson**.

David Fursdon, Trustee, responded on behalf of the Board of Trustees describing his involvement in farming and as a qualified rural surveyor. Mr Fursdon acknowledged that the photograph shown was distressing but stressed that in 40 years he had only seen a deer caught in this way on one other occasion, and never on barbed wire.

The Trust had recorded only two incidents of deer caught in fencing, not necessarily involving barbed wire, in eight years across 600,000 acres of land, despite the population of deer being at an all-time high. Staff were trained to inspect and maintain fences properly, to identify deer hotspots and trails, and to alter fences accordingly. Tenants had also been reminded of their responsibilities in this regard. Rangers used their understanding of local conditions and circumstances to apply correct management of fencing and other issues and should be trusted to make appropriate decisions.

In closing, Mr Fursdon commented that the resolution was a useful reminder that animal welfare should not be taken for granted. However, the Trust believed that robust and proportionate measures were in place regarding fencing and this was why the Board of Trustees recommended that members vote against the resolution.

Members raised a number of discussion points.

Was a non-barbed option available as an alternative?

A deer and lamb had been found in the Marlborough area entangled in fencing, but it had not involved barbed wire.

The issue appeared to be with the replacement of posts and not with the use of barbed wire, so could broken posts be replaced with metal ones to ensure wire was kept taught?

While doing some conservation work in Windermere a member had witnessed two deer caught in fencing, one of which had to be rescued.

Could the Trust set up a research group to look at how boundary methods could be modernised with risk to animals minimised?

Barbed wire should be removed where it was not essential.

Barbed-wire fencing was not always maintained and often not visible, and a consistent policy was needed. The call for research on good practice was supported.

From the photographs it appeared that it was the design of the fence that was at fault, not barbed wire per se.

A member of the audience who had been a livestock farmer for 50 years commented that he had not witnessed animals trapped in wire during this time. He had witnessed the impact on people when livestock escaped, resulting in damage to other people's properties and even causing road traffic accidents, which he had found sobering. He complimented the Trust on its high-quality fencing operation and advised that he would vote against the resolution.

In summing up, **David Fursdon** suggested that a balance was required in land management that took into consideration animal welfare, protection of habitats and keeping stock in place. Barbed wire had a statistically minimal chance of injuring deer, and the Board of Trustees believed decisions on fencing should be left to staff and not prescribed. Members were invited to vote against the resolution.

In his closing statement, **David Sarson** asked members to consider that there were alternatives to barbed wire which was an outdated method of restricting the movement of livestock. Barbed-wire fencing was often in poor condition and was not visible. He reiterated the point that the use of one wire may help to ensure that less deer were trapped. He commented that Norway banned the installation of new barbed wire in 2010 and made the point that Rolls-Royce got its hides for its car seats from Norway because they were not damaged by the barbed wire. He appealed to members to support the resolution.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their final comments. Following a show of hands, a ballot was held. The votes cast at the meeting were added to those of the members who had voted in advance of the meeting. The results of the ballot were as follows:

	For	Against
Specified	12,553	18,739
Discretionary	1	4270
Abstentions	2,506	
TOTAL	12,554	23,009

The resolution was not carried.

10. Conclusion

The Chair thanked all for attending and watching online, and formally closed the 2018 Annual General Meeting.