

Saturday 25 October 2025, 9:30 for 10am
Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot, Oxford OX11 7JN
Register your place: bbowt.org.uk/celebration

Dear BBOWT Member,

I'm delighted to invite you to our 64th AGM, at Didcot Civic Hall. You're welcome from 9:30 for coffee and to browse the pop-up shop featuring sustainable gifts from our Visitor Centre shops. The Civic Hall is easily accessible by both bus and train, and there is plenty of free parking at the venue.

This year we're changing the format of the day to open up more of the day to more people, showcase more of what BBOWT is doing, and allow more time for members to meet each other and our team. We really hope you'll join us!

We'll still conduct the formal business of the AGM, and that will begin at 10am. For those members who have been before, this part of the day will be much shorter than usual, but we do need as many members as possible to attend. More information on that is below.

Following the AGM, things will get a little less formal with a Celebration of BBOWT, to which all are warmly welcomed – members and non-members alike. This will include talk from our Chief Executive, Estelle Bailey, with video highlights from the year. We'll also feature three 'TED-style' talks from members of the BBOWT team, giving more insight and depth into specific areas of work. Talks will be as follows:

- Matthew Stanton, External Affairs Director, 'Defending Nature in Hostile Times'
- Liz Shearer, Community Engagement Director, 'Community Super Heroes'
- Emily Coulam, Nature and Greenspaces Officer for Reconnecting the Bernwood Otmoor and Ray Project, 'Glow-in-the-Dark Caterpillars: *Lighting the path to nature's recovery*'.

Before the final session, there will be a lunch break. Guests are very welcome to either bring their own lunch or to pre-book lunch (available to book and pay ahead of time [by clicking this link](#)). The final session of the day will celebrate our amazing volunteers with the 2025 Volunteer Awards, and we will announce and display the winners of the 2025 Photography Competition.

One of the critical functions of the AGM is to consider the make-up of the Board of Trustees and make appropriate appointments. This year, we have not recruited any new Trustees as no current Trustee terms are coming to an end.

The Governance and Nominations Committee considered those existing Trustees whose term of office was due to end this year but who wished to stand again. The Committee recommended to the Board that the following nominations should go forward to the AGM: Zoe Hancock, Tim Davies, Mark Chacksfield and Garth Clark (as continuing Trustees). The Board is pleased to recommend these candidates to our wider membership.

This year, we also recognise the dedicated service of two retiring honorary vice presidents: Martin Spray and Dr Pam Berry, and one retiring Trustee: Greg Webster. Our thanks go to them for their years of commitment to both BBOWT and nature's recovery. We are also delighted that Steve Backshall is happy to stand for re-election as President.

This year we ask that all voting is carried out ahead of time and submitted electronically. Online voting is available at www.bbowt.org.uk/AGM2025. If you require any support or would like to request a paper copy of the voting form, please email events@bbowt.org.uk or call: 01865 788300 and leave a message

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for someone to get in touch to help. All votes must be received by BBOWT at least 48 hours before the AGM.

If you wish to put a question to the Board please submit it in advance using the form that can be found on www.bbowt.org.uk/AGM2025 at least one week prior to the AGM, in order for the Board to be able to provide a full explanation on the day.

I look forward to meeting many fellow BBOWT members on Saturday 25 October.

George Levvy, Chair

64th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 63rd Annual General Meeting: 25th October 2024, and Matters Arising
3. To receive and consider the report of the Chief Executive
4. To receive and consider the report of the Board of Trustees
5. To receive and consider the Audit Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025
6. To appoint auditors for 2025/2026
7. Reappointment of Trustees, Retirement of Honorary Vice-Presidents, and Re-election of President
8. Any other business (**items to be received one week prior to the meeting**)

This is when questions that have been submitted in advance will be addressed. If you have a question please submit it via the form on www.bbowt.org.uk/AGM2025
A large print version of this document is available on request.
Please telephone 01865 788300 / 01865 775476 or email events@bbowt.org.uk

63rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

BERKSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND OXFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST
(Charity Number 204330, Company Number 680007)

FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2024

Meeting held Radley College, Oxford and virtually via Zoom

MINUTES

Present 63 members attended the meeting (42 in person and 21 online)

Chair George Levvy (GL)

GL introduced Zoe Hancock (ZH), Honorary Treasurer and Estelle Bailey (EB), Chief Executive

GL noted that this year's AGM was being held hybrid both in person and online and the success of the format of the meeting will be reviewed for next year.

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Members had been asked to vote ahead of the meeting via proxy. 42 proxy votes had been submitted. All items that are required to be 'proposed' and seconded' will be proposed by GL and seconded by ZH.

There was a quorum present at the AGM.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies have been received from: Steve Proud, Liz Shearer, Kate Titford, Garth Clark, Miles Evans, Tim Davies, Prue Addison Dr Timothy Bartel, Anthony Chapman, Nichola Connolly, Gillian Cornelius, Gill Crewdson, Greg Fairley, Linda Forsythe, Mary Furlong-Shima, Catherine Harwood, Michael LeRoy, John Morton, Roger Noel, Peter Pool, Tim Praill, Rosemary Praill, Bill & Joan Ridgeway, Elizabeth Scully, Eric Stone, Nicola Trott, Pat Watson, Michael Whittaker, Peter Williams, Arbaiah Aird, Ken Austin, Jo Brown, Connie Butler, David Byrne, Anthony Chapman, Catherine Kennedy, Mark Webb, Martin Webster, Martin Wheeler.

2. MINUTES OF THE 62nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, held on 14 October 2023

Proxy votes for the 62nd Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 14 October 2023 were as follows: **42** proxies provided, **39** FOR, **0** AGAINST, **3** ABSTAINING APPROVAL

The minutes of 62nd AGM held on 14th October 2023 were **APPROVED** as a true record of the proceedings and were signed by GL.

Proposed: George Levvy

Seconded: Zoe Hancock

Matters arising: There were no matters arising surrounding the 2023 minutes.

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The CEO presented an impact report video of the activities and achievements of the last financial year. BBOWT had a challenging year due to the cost-of-living crisis but with members support and the significant amount of work undertaken by Volunteers, BBOWT continue to work hard towards its vision of more nature everywhere for everyone across the 3 counties.

Highlights included:

- BBOWT celebrates its 65th anniversary next year, building on the legacy of its early days, when it was volunteer run with minimal resources but achieved significant impact.
- Today, BBOWT has grown to 150 staff with an £8M turnover, still rooted in ecology, science, and evidence based land management of reserves.
- BBOWT has developed a comprehensive toolkit for addressing the nature and climate crisis, including planning, policy, public affairs, education, community engagement, partnerships with farms, landscape scale projects, Future Nature Consultancy, BHG/Green Finance, and more.
- Growing recognition from people, businesses, councils, and farmers underscores the importance of nature and climate health, and BBOWT has a strong platform for building resilience.
- Together with the Wildlife Trusts, BBOWT is part of a powerful movement for environmental change.
- This year has been remarkable, with membership reaching its highest level, plus significant progress in community initiatives, farming partnerships, and through our Future Nature Consultancy.
- A strategic review has been ongoing to guide BBOWT's future.
- Community and farmer clusters have strengthened, supporting larger, more connected conservations project, such as the reconnection of Bernwood, Otmoor and Ray.

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- Launched last year, the Nature Recovery Fund aims to raise £3M over 3 years and has already reached £500K. Members were thanked for their contributions, and a brief animation of the Nature Recovery Fund was shown.

EB expressed heartfelt thanks to all Trustees, Staff and Volunteers for their hard work and dedication, as well as to members for their generous contributions and support over the past year.

4. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

GL reported that the board of trustees continue to oversee the financial and strategic management of BBOWT, monitoring risk, and ensuring that all policies and procedures are compliant and complied with. There are a number of standard items which must be reviewed and addressed over the course of a year which were shown during the presentation. The Board meets quarterly to hear from the Chief Executive and Director Team. Outside these meetings there are one or two strategy days. There are a number of trustee-led committees who also meet regularly and report into the board including Finance & Audit Committee, Governance & Nominations Committee and H&S Committee.

Key discussions this year have been reviewing and reflecting on the current strategy Wilder for More Nature Everywhere 2021-26 which is now just beyond its halfway point with most of the objectives being on track.

Key highlights:

Goal 1: 30% of land well-managed for nature

- Purchase of Ludgershall Meadows in 2021
- Completion of Water Environment Grant at Chimney Meadows Nature Reserve.

Ludgershall Meadows and Old Duxford (part of Chimney Meadows) have now been registered at Biodiversity Net Gain sites.

Goal 2: Empower people to take action for nature

There has been real growth in community engagement and the Next Door Nature programme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which enabled work with several urban communities in Slough and Reading.

Goal 3: Secure our future

The Nature Recovery Fund, Meles Giving Circle and Legacy Society have all been launched in the last two years which help to ensure fundraising is aligned with strategic priorities. Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion are also being embedded into all levels of the organisation.

BBOWT is currently reviewing what 2030 might look like, which will serve as the focus for strategic discussions at the board level.

GL expressed gratitude to the trustees for their contributions to the board, as well as to the BBOWT staff and volunteers. He emphasised how fortunate the organisation is to have such dedicated individuals and acknowledged the significant impact of their contributions.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

ZH expressed thanks to Helen Belcher, Finance & Strategic Operations Director, and her team for all their hard work in producing the accounts.

ZH presented information on the Annual Accounts, noting the key figures. Overall BBOWT's income for the 2023/24 year was £8.7M, an improvement on £6.9M last year. There had been

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an increase in legacies of over £300K and a significant increase in income from Habitat Banking and Future Nature.

Membership income was £3.2M an increase from last year even with the difficulties being faced with the cost-of-living issues, etc. Numbers of members also continues to raise with a new high of 29,849 as at 31.03.24.

Total expenditure for the year was £8.3M. Of this approximately £5.3M was allocated to charitable activities from both unrestricted and restricted funds. Additionally, £1.5M was spent on fundraising activities, primarily supporting the membership programme. Other costs included expenses related to generating income from our cafes and shops. It has been another challenging year due to rising inflation; however, as conditions begin to stabilize, we hope to plan with greater certainty moving forward.

ZH reported on expenditure related to charitable activities, noting that £2M was spent on managing nature reserves and approximately £1.5M on education and awareness initiatives. Additionally, around £1M was allocated to projects and activities aimed at caring for the wider countryside.

The balance sheet continues to be in a good financial position with £6.9M in cash and investments some of which relates to restricted funds and so is not available for general use. Approx £0.5M is being held for future land acquisition to protect and enhance land in our counties.

The trustees have set a free reserves policy to hold at between 3-6 months of free reserves which gives protection in the event of major changes to plans which have been useful during recent years with the challenges of Covid and inflation. Current forecasts show us staying within the set policy, and on a slightly upwards trend.

ZH gave an update on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Future Nature (consultancy arm of BBOWT) two new and growing income streams.

No finance questions had been received ahead of the meeting. There had been an opportunity for members to put any finance specific questions forward prior to the meeting.

There was a further opportunity for members to put questions to the panel, via the Q&A function, but none were received.

Approval of Accounts:

Proxy votes for the financial report for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 were as follows: **42** proxies provided, **41** FOR, **0** AGAINST, **1** ABSTAINING APPROVAL

The financial report for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 was **APPROVED**.

Proposed: George Levvy

Seconded: Zoe Hancock

6. The Appointment of Auditors

The Board recommended the reappointment of Haysmacintyre as auditors for the year 2024/25. BBOWT will continue to review their appointment on at least a 3 yearly basis.

Proxy votes for the re-appointment of haysmacintyre as the Trust's auditors were as follows: **42** proxies provided, **42** FOR, **0** AGAINST, **0** ABSTAINING APPROVAL

The membership **APPROVED** the re-appointment of haysmacintyre as the Trust's auditors.

Proposed: George Levvy

Seconded: Zoe Hancock

7. Election of Trustees

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The Governance & Nominations Committee had recommended to the Board that the following nominations should go forward to the AGM:

Natalie Ganpatsingh and Gregory Webster's term extensions were inadvertently omitted from last year's AGM. As a result, they were co-opted by the board for a year, pending approval of their term extension at this year's AGM. The Board further recommended George Levvy, Drew Bennellick and Miles Evans, as continuing Trustees, for a further 4 year period.

The Governance & Nominations Committee had met to consider and lead the process of recruiting new Trustees to the Board. After a process of application and interview, the Governance & Nominations Committee recommended Amy Padfield, Sam Burgh, Subash Ludhra and Simon Dickson as new trustees and short biographies of each were included in the AGM papers.

Jolyon Austin (Chair of Governance & Nominations Committee) introduced three of the new trustees and conducted short interviews around their passion for wildlife and what skills and value they hoped to bring to the BBOWT Board of Trustees.

There were three Honorary Vice Presidents: Dr Robin Buxton, Audrey, Lady Wood, and Professor Sir Dieter Helm, up for re-election this year. All three have been fundamental to the success of BBOWT for many years, and all three continue to support the organisation. All three have indicated their willingness to continue and they were recommended to the membership for their reappointment.

There were two trustees retiring this year – Graeme Thompson and Frances Brindle.

Details of voting:

All were proposed by George Levvy and Seconded by Zoe Hancock:

Existing Trustees:

George Levvy

42 proxies provided

41 FOR

0 AGAINST

1 ABSTAINING

Miles Evans

42 proxies provided

42 FOR

0 AGAINST

0 ABSTAINING

Drew Bennellick

42 proxies provided

42 FOR

0 AGAINST

0 ABSTAINING

Greg Webster

42 proxies provided

42 FOR

0 AGAINST

0 ABSTAINING

Natalie Ganpatsingh

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42 proxies provided
41 FOR
0 AGAINST
1 ABSTAINING

Therefore, the existing trustees named above were duly re-elected for a further 4 year period.

New Trustees

Amy Padfield
42 proxies provided
42 FOR
0 AGAINST
0 ABSTAINING

Sam Burgh
42 proxies provided
40 FOR
0 AGAINST
2 ABSTAINING

Subash Ludhra
42 proxies provided
40 FOR
0 AGAINST
2 ABSTAINING

Simon Dickson
42 proxies provided
42 FOR
0 AGAINST
0 ABSTAINING

Therefore Amy Padfield, Sam Burgh, Subash Ludhra and Simon Dickson were elected as new trustees for a period of 4 years.

Honorary Vice Presidents

Dr Robin Buxton
42 proxies provided
42 FOR
0 AGAINST
0 ABSTAINING

Professor Sir Dieter Helm
42 proxies provided
42 FOR
0 AGAINST
0 ABSTAINING

Audrey, Lady Wood
42 proxies provided
42 FOR
0 AGAINST
0 ABSTAINING

Therefore, Dr Robin Buxton, Professor Sir Dieter Helm and Audrey, Lady Wood were re-elected as Honorary Vice Presidents for a further term.

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The Chair gave a heartfelt thank you and best wishes to two long serving trustees, whose tenure on the board concludes at the AGM. Graeme Thompson has served as Honorary Treasurer and Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, while Frances Brindle been the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees and our fundraising and marketing lead for many years. They were both acknowledged for the considerable time and expertise they have dedicated to BBOWT and were wished well in their future endeavours.

8. Questions/Any Other Business

Members had been asked for questions, to be received 1 week prior to the AGM, to allow for them to be answered fully. One question had been submitted in advance, and others taken from the floor during the AGM:

Question	Response
<i>Please can volunteers have training in using social media correctly?</i>	The Policy Team will consider running a session for members and volunteers on how they could support BBOWT campaigns.
<i>The Complaints Log is reviewed at Board Level, but there is a tendency for charity leadership to overlook the positive feedback or take the plaudits for granted. It would be good to know that the plaudits are taken as seriously as the complaints.</i>	Thank you! When positive feedback comes in, there is a process to make sure it is recorded and fed back both to members of the BBOWT Team who did the good work and BBOWT's leadership.
<i>Wokingham Council appeared to be absent on the Nature Recovery projects and there have been concerns around their mowing of verges – has BBOWT made any progressing in trying to persuade Wokingham Borough Council to pay more attention to conservation matters?</i>	There are three Local Nature Partnerships across the three counties. Wokingham Borough are an active member of the Berkshire LNP. They point out that they are under financial and resource pressure, so (for example) BBOWT have highlighted that they could save money by not mowing the verges. We are working on it and building the relationship, but there is still work to be done in getting this translated on the ground.
<i>Question around planning applications: in light of government changes and the streamlined planning system, will BBOWT be busier and will the government be listening to wildlife charities?</i>	BBOWT are aware of the government's targets for new homes and although we do not know where they will go we can assume a lot will be built within the 3 counties. There is the National Policy Framework and legislation changes coming within the planning system. We will work to encourage the right changes in the right places - e.g. we will support a solar farm in the right place, but we may oppose one if the harm to nature will outweigh the benefits of renewable energy. We do expect there to be more planning work for BBOWT to deal with, and so we will try and be a bit more strategic with our approach with local planning within authorities.
<i>Team Wilder and funding for local nature project/rough around the edges project – are there any more plans for this kind of work to be done?</i>	In relation to Team Wilder, the current strategy is based around people being one of our major pillars of activity and will remain so. We are now looking into the future to look at how we can fund this. As well as continuing with the community-focused projects, we will be putting more unrestricted income into staff posts to support this to support our local communities better to reflect and try and reach people we are not currently reaching. This is vitally important for the future of nature.

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Additionally, the Board seems very impressive – what are we doing to make our board more diverse?

In terms of board diversity, the board are at the beginning of a process which they are taking seriously. They have recently agreed to create an Equity Equality Diversity Inclusion & Belonging (EEDIB) subcommittee which will be chaired by Amy Padfield (Trustee) who has a lot of experience in this field). She will be supported by Becky Hall, BBOWT's People Director.

Any additional questions were to be submitted and responded to outside of the AGM. Questions can be submitted at any time via info@bbowt.org.uk

The AGM closed at 11.15am