

Saturday 14 November, 9:30 for 10am

Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot, Oxford OX11 7JN

Register your place: <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/celebrate>

Dear BBOWT Member,

I'm delighted to invite you to our 65th 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's event is going to be packed, with plenty of opportunities to meet BBOWT staff and volunteers, hear from speakers, and even stay for a film screening at the end. We hope you'll join us!

We'll still conduct the formal business of the AGM, and that will begin at 10am. This part of the day will be much shorter than previously, but we do need as many members as possible to attend. More information on that is below, including biographies of the two Trustees we are proposing to elect.

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. The rest of the day will be split into parts, and guests are welcome to come for some or all – separate booking links are available.

First, we will look back on the past five years of BBOWT's impact for nature as we wrap up our 2021-2026 *Wilder* Strategy. You'll hear from our Chief Executive, Estelle Bailey MBE. We'll also celebrate our amazing volunteers with the 2026 Volunteer Awards.

There will be a lunch break, and 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](#)). After lunch we'll look into the future as we debut our new Strategy 2030. This will include a message from Professor Sir Dieter Helm CBE, Vice-President of BBOWT and Professor of Economic Policy at Oxford University. You'll also see some 'TED-style' talks from members of the BBOWT team, giving more insight and depth into specific areas of work, and a possible special guest (TBC).

Finally, we are thrilled to be able to host a screening of the [People's Emergency Briefing](#), a 50-minute long film hosted by Chris Packham exploring the National Emergency Briefing presented at Westminster in November 2025. This is not an easy watch, as it explores how the climate and nature emergencies could impact our lives, our economy and our future. But it does offer hope, and will be followed by a structured discussion to explore solutions and actions we can take. If you're planning to stay for the whole day, it will finish by 4pm.

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 recruited two new Trustees as two Trustees are retiring at this AGM.

The Governance and Nominations Committee audited the skills of the current board, and identified that we could be strengthened with additional expertise in finance, governance and strategy. After a wide recruitment process, Fiona Manning and Dr Sasha Woods were co-opted on to the Board. At this AGM, we recommend their election to the wider membership. Both of their profiles are included below the

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agenda and minutes of last year's meeting, and both will be attending on the day to introduce themselves to BBOWT members.

A second key function of the AGM is to approve the appointment of external auditors. After a long relationship with HaysMac, Trustees ran an open tender process in late 2025 to consider switching to new auditors. We invited bids from firms highest ranked in terms of their charity experience, customer feedback and ethical / sustainability policies, and ran a competitive two-stage process narrowing down to three final firms. After in-person interviews and presentations, we are delighted to recommend the appointment of Bishop Fleming as our auditors for the 2026-27 cycle.

All voting will be carried out ahead of time and submitted electronically. Online voting is available at www.bbowt.org.uk/AGM2026. 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 775476 and leave a message. 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/AGM2026, at least one week prior to the AGM, in order for the Board to be able to provide a full explanation on the day. 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 14 November.

George Levvy, Chair

65th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome from the Chair
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of 64th Annual General Meeting: 25 October 2025, and Matters Arising
4. To receive and consider the Finance Report, to include Audit Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2026
5. To appoint auditors for 2026/2027
6. Election and Retirement of Trustees
7. 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/AGM2026.

A large print version of this document is available on request. Please telephone 01865 788300 / 01865 775476 or email events@bbowt.org.uk

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64th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER 2025

Meeting held Didcot Civic Hall, Oxford

MINUTES

Present 108 member attended the meeting

Chair Jolyon Austin (JA)

Estelle Bailey (EB) welcomed everyone to AGM and handed over to Jolyon Austin (JA), BBOWT's Vice Chair, deputising for George Levvy who was unable to attend. Zoe Hancock (ZH), Honorary Treasurer was also introduced.

There followed a moment of recognition for Dame Jane Goodall who had died recently.

Members had been asked to vote ahead of the meeting via proxy. **82** proxy votes had been submitted. All items that are required to be 'proposed' and seconded' had been proposed by George Levvy and seconded by Zoe Hancock.

There was a quorum present at the AGM.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies have been received from: Judith Hough, Anne Nelhams, Phillip RancRoger Munnghes, Huw Morgan, Chris Sinclair, Brian Moffatt, Linda Laurance, Roy Slocombe, Sarah Cox, Lorraine Mosolf, Chris Chacksfield, Mark Richards, Antony Melville, Carolyn Nash, Wig Victoria SAYELL, Ron Lloyd, Annie & Derek McNamara, Elisabeth Wood, Louise Upton, Ian Noble, Michelle Ryan, Andrew Greer, Michael Juniper, Caroline Priday, Rosalyn Miles, David Sharp, Mr G Sissons & Ms GK Freeman, John Parker, Garry Forster, Bhupinder Singh Klair, Mrs Sheila Franklin, Claire Forrest, Helen Tranter, Helen Roberts, John Magrath, Sally Halfacre, Michael Handy & Barbara Handy, Helen Belcher and Gary Belcher, Kate Ashbrook, Carol & Derek Welch, Heather Combe, Kathryn Witts, Jill Cobb, Angus Ross, Shirley Strange, Christopher Hughes, Roger Munn, Emma Wilberforce, Penelope Ormerod, Susannah Muldoon, Mrs Christine Castens, Joanna Taylor, Paul Miles, W Bridle, David Loasby, Elizabeth Mansfield, Derek Trinder, Nigel Williamson, Kenneth Smith, Gita Szwer, John & Margaret Braithwaite, and Richard & Julie Birch.

2. MINUTES OF THE 63rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, held on 25 October 2024

Proxy votes for the 63rd Annual General Meeting held on Friday 25 October 2024 were as follows: **82** proxies provided, **78** FOR, **0** AGAINST, **4** ABSTAINING APPROVAL

The minutes of 63rd AGM held on 25 October 2024 were **APPROVED** as a true record of the proceedings and were signed by the Chair.

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Proposed: George Levvy

Seconded: Zoe Hancock

There were no matters arising surrounding the 2024 minutes.

3. **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025**

The AGM received a presentation summarizing the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025. The report included financial highlights, written commentary on activities and achievements during the year, and updates on governance and other key matters. The Honorary Treasurer thanked Rachel Powell, Head of Finance, and her team for their work in preparing the accounts.

Income: total income for the year was £10.9M, an improvement on £8.7M last year. Of the £2.2M increase, £1.3M is the profit from the sale of The Lodge, the proceeds of which will be used to invest in a more modern office building with the remainder used to make improvements to a number of existing buildings on the landholdings. The income has been designated and labelled as estates development fund in the reserves note. The remaining increase was largely due to income from selling Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) units – the income is largely restricted to improving biodiversity at those specific sites, over the next 30 years, and is not available for general running costs.

Membership income remains strong at £3.3M, an increase on the £3.2M achieved last year. Membership numbers have declined slightly but it is heartening to see that there are still very high levels of engagement and support. Members were thanked for their ongoing support of BBOWT and all the work that they do.

Expenditure: total expenditure was £8.9M (£8.3M in 2024), much of which was attributable to increased National Insurance Contributions, cost of living pay rises for staff and additional costs passed on by suppliers and contractors. £5.8M was spent on charitable activities and £1.3M on fundraising activities, the main part of which is in support of the membership programme, and other costs linked to income generation such as cafes and shops. It has been another challenging year, but trustees noted that increased spending on charitable activities was particularly positive.

A breakdown on charitable spend showed nearly £3M spent on managing the nature reserves, £1.8M on education and awareness activities working with schools, young people, and local communities, and nearly £1.1M on looking after the wider countryside – projects and activities which we support to enhance nature outside of the land we directly own.

Balance Sheet: BBOWT remains in a strong financial position with £9.5M in cash and investments, primarily reflecting proceeds from the Lodge sale. The charity holds £1.7M in restricted funds, including £0.5M designated for future land acquisition, such as the planned Hamgreen Wood purchase.

Reserves: free cash reserves are maintained within the trustee policy range of 3-6 months of unrestricted operating costs, providing financial stability and resilience amid ongoing uncertainty.

Questions on the financial report were invited in advance of the AGM, but none were received. ZH invited members to approach her after the meeting should they have any questions or queries.

Approval of Accounts:

Proxy votes for the financial report for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 were as follows: **82** proxies provided, **81** FOR, **0** AGAINST, **1** ABSTAINING APPROVAL

The financial report for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 was **APPROVED**.

Proposed: George Levvy

Seconded: Zoe Hancock

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4. The Appointment of Auditors

The Board recommended the reappointment of Haysmacintyre as auditors for the year 2025/26.

Proxy votes for the re-appointment of Haysmacintyre as the Trust's auditors were as follows: **82** proxies provided, **81** FOR, **0** AGAINST, **1** ABSTAINING APPROVAL

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

Proposed: George Levvy

Seconded: Zoe Hancock

5. Re-Election of President and Trustees

The Governance & Nominations Committee did not pursue any recruitment of new trustees this year as there is a full complement of board members. There were four trustees whose initial term of office ends this year. All four wished to stand again and these have been nominated for re-appointment for a second four year term. The President had also agreed to stand again for a further period of 3 years.

Details of voting:

All were proposed by George Levvy and Seconded by Zoe Hancock except for voting for Zoe Hancock where this was proposed by George Levvy and seconded by Jolyon Austin:

President:

Steve Backshall

82 proxies provided

81 FOR

0 AGAINST

1 ABSTAINING

Existing Trustees:

Zoe Hancock

82 proxies provided

81 FOR

0 AGAINST

1 ABSTAINING

Mark Chacksfield

82 proxies provided

79 FOR

1 AGAINST

2 ABSTAINING

Tim Davies

82 proxies provided

80 FOR

0 AGAINST

2 ABSTAINING

Garth Clark

82 proxies provided

78 FOR

1 AGAINST

3 ABSTAINING

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Therefore, the President was re-elected for a further term of 3 years and the existing trustees named above were duly re-elected for a further 4 year period.

There were two Honorary Vice Presidents who decided to retire this year: Dr Pam Berry and Martin Spray. There was also one retiring Trustee: Gregory Webster.

It was noted that all three of these people had made invaluable contributions to the success and profile of BBOWT. They had been long term supporters and worked behind the scenes to help increase BBOWT's voice and its impact. Heartfelt thanks and best wishes were extended to all three of them.

6. Any Other Business

The Vice Chair took a moment to celebrate Estelle Bailey's MBE, awarded earlier this year in the King's Birthday Honours list, in recognition of her outstanding services to nature's recovery. BBOWT is delighted that Estelle's leadership of the organisation over the past 11 years, and her more than 25 years of dedication to the Wildlife Trust movement, have been publicly recognised.

7. Questions

Members had been asked for questions, to be received 1 week prior to the AGM, to allow for them to be answered fully. Three questions had been submitted in advance:

Questions	BBOWT response.
The increased popularity of the small hide at Warburg Nature Reserve, mainly due to YouTubers, led to a packed carpark and all day crowding of the hide. Are there any checks as to whether those using the hide are BBOWT members, and if not are they making any donations to it, as they will certainly plan to benefit financially from their footage being shown on YouTube?	After a flurry of activity, the small hide at Warburg has returned to its normal peaceful state. It happened following a posting to the Oxfordshire Birding website about the sighting of Hawfinches at the reserve, which is notable and rare for this part of the world. The word obviously got out and photographers and birders started appearing, some as early as 04.00 in the morning. It was elbow room only for a couple of weeks and some people described a bit of an "atmosphere". Luckily, both members and BBOWT staff were able to watch the Hawfinches and Flycatchers as they bathed and drank from the pond during the extended period of drought. At the time the member was enquiring about, we also had a First Aid course running at Warburg and our usual midweek work parties adding to the full carpark. We do not check who is using the hide, as we support free access to all to nature and our sites at BBOWT. There is a donation station in the carpark, and our staff and trailside ambassadors did make a point of encouraging people to leave donations if they had seen the birds they wanted or taken good photographs. There was a very slight increase in donations during this period but not a huge amount.
There are very few reserves in north Buckinghamshire and we	The public access issue at Little Linford is currently unresolvable, despite several conversations with the

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have now lost access to the carpark at Little Linford Wood. Are there any plans for any other reserves or activities for members near Milton Keynes?	landowner and tenant farmer. There are a number of public rights of way that lead into the wood but be aware that parking is a significant distance from the wood and so it limits access to the site to only those with good mobility. The site does still have an active winter volunteer work party. Both Foxcote Reservoir and Pilch Field which are within a 20min drive from Milton Keynes. We don't currently have Milton Keynes-based activities, but we have good links with other organisations that do, and we are happy to signpost members towards those. For example, The Parks Trust and the Milton Keynes Natural History Society are very active in Milton Keynes itself. In addition, there are three Green Gyms in Milton Keynes (established by The Conservation Volunteers) and Wolverton Community Orchard.
Are there any plans introduce beavers to suitable BBOWT sites?	We are huge supporters of beavers, and we are starting to get reports of sightings in our three counties. We have previously carried out a review of BBOWT reserves regarding the suitability for beaver enclosures and we are now looking how we might support wild beaver population reintroductions at a regional scale through a specific project.

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 BBOWT 64th AGM closed at 11.22am

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NEW TRUSTEE BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Sasha Woods was co-opted to the BBOWT Board as a Trustee in August 2026. She is passionate about the Trust's vision of creating bigger, more connected landscapes where both nature and people can thrive.

She brings extensive strategic leadership experience from the environmental sector and currently serves as Chief of Staff and Strategy at the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, where she helps shape organisational strategy and drive performance. Previously, as Director of Science and Policy at Earthwatch Europe, she championed citizen science and evidence-based approaches to tackling environmental challenges, particularly freshwater issues.

Sasha is especially interested in freshwater ecosystems and has led impactful projects linking science, communities and policy, including work investigating metal pollution in waterways around Corby. Alongside her executive role, she serves as an Independent Scientific Advisor to Earthwatch Europe and sits on the Advisory Board of Friends of the Thames.

Outside work, Sasha completed the London Marathon in 2025 in support of freshwater citizen science initiatives. She also shares her time with an energetic border collie and can claim a brief appearance as an extra in *The Witcher*.

Fiona Manning was co-opted to the BBOWT Board as a Trustee in August 2026. She is a finance professional with 25 years' experience in public markets investment in emerging markets, specialising in sustainable and impact investing. She brings a wealth of experience in financial oversight, governance and sustainable investment. She is passionate about the work that BBOWT does connecting communities to the wildlife around them.

Fiona lives in the Chiltern Hills with her husband, 3 children and dog. She loves walking both locally and further afield, struggles to tame her garden and enjoys cooking the variable output of her veggie patch. She is an enthusiastic traveller, enjoys learning languages and has visited over 60 countries.