

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust – AGM 2025

Date	Monday 3 rd November 2025 at 6pm
Location	Zoom and broadcast live via YouTube
Attendees	Trustees: Phil Heads, Sylvia Wyatt, Dagmar Junghanns, Fiona Goff, Julian Crawford, Tim Gilson, Piers Maynard WWT: Joanna Lewis, Jennifer Davies, Damian Haasjes, Carrie Starbuck, Becki McKinlay
Apologies	Trustees: Melanie Henry, Richard Gantlett WWT: Leo Henley-Lock

Minutes

1. Welcome

Dr Phil Heads, Chair of Trustees, warmly welcomed everyone to the Sixty Second AGM of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) with Jennifer Davies, Director Finance and Operations and Company Secretary noting apologies from Trustees Richard Gantlett and Melanie Henry.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the 61st Annual General Meeting held on 4th November 2024

- Minutes had been circulated to members with the AGM invite.
- Minutes of the 61st meeting were proposed by Dagmar Junghanns and seconded by Tim Gilson.
- Member votes were cast; 139 for, 1 against and 11 abstain.
- The minutes were adopted.

3. Matters Arising

None were identified.

4. Presentation of Annual Report and Adoption of the Impact Report and Accounts

- A year in numbers and AGM video presented.
- Highlights from the video were discussed:
 - Connecting people with nature: WWT a national leader, provides advice to other Wildlife Trusts based on our experience gained over many years
 - Nature on our doorsteps: local activity happening all over Wiltshire
 - Woodland restoration: Ash die back – turned a disaster into an opportunity. Increase in species richness thanks to careful management, planting and restoration
 - Growing scale and partnerships: not just field and farm scale – landscape scale to connect bigger, better habitats and manage for nature. Benefits: clean air, soil and water, natural flood management, carbon reduction and climate resilience. Only made possible by working in partnership with other landowners.
- Financial account highlights for year ending 31st March 2025.
 - Auditors: fair reflection of financial status, financially healthy & WWT is a going concern

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- Full accounts available in due course on the Charity Commission's website
 - Figures broadly in line with recent trends
 - Income received: £6.2 million. Total expenditure: just under £6 million
 - Statement shows spending split for members to see how money is used to meet Strategic Goals
 - Balance sheet: total assets £18.5 million with over £10 million of heritage assets (nature reserves)
 - Next financial year: need to be mindful of changes in the external environment and government policies
 - Financial reserves target: 3 months of operating costs - WWT currently exceeding this
 - Significant purchases: Great Chalfield lease, and Manor Farm Poor Patch to extend an existing reserve
 - Financial Strategy and Trustee oversight: ensure stability, invest in strategy and strengthen capacity
- Adoption of annual report and accounts: proposed by Fiona Goff and seconded by Julian Crawford.
 - Member votes were cast; 147 for, none against and 4 abstain.
 - Annual report and accounts adopted.

5. Appointment of Auditors

In response to a member question, it was confirmed that the trustees have appointed Sumer Audit, previously known as Monahans, a firm of chartered accountants and business advisors as our auditors for a number of years. Most recently, the lead auditor has been James Gare, a partner at Sumer. James is a specialist in auditing charities and has a deep understanding of the WWT financial systems and of course the relevant statutory accounting practices and standards. As we transition to a new finance system in 2026, our auditors will be ensuring that the new system is optimised to our accounting and reporting needs.

- The appointment of Sumer Audit had been proposed by Piers Maynard and seconded by Julian Crawford.
- The member votes have been cast; 141 for, none against and 10 abstain.
- Sumer Audit have been appointed as the Trust Auditors and Trustees will fix their remuneration.

6. Election of Trustees

Phil discussed trustees, the role of trustees and WWT current recruitment drive.

Re-election of trustees: Fiona Goff and Tim Gilson have served as Trustees for three years and are seeking re-election for a second term.

- Fiona was proposed by Phil Heads and seconded by Mel Henry.
 - Member votes were cast; 146 for, 2 against and 5 abstain.
- Tim was proposed by Sylvia Wyatt and seconded by Phil Heads.
 - Member votes were cast; 147 for, 2 against and 4 abstain.
- Fiona Goff and Tim Gilson have been re-elected as Trustees

Outgoing trustees: Two Trustees are stepping down after down at this AGM as they have completed

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their terms as Trustees. Thank you to Charles Fattorini and Julian Barlow after 6 years for all their wisdom and support.

- With outgoing trustees that means there are currently 9 trustees, which is the minimum allowed by WWT Articles of Association.
- WWT looking to recruit new trustees, who will be proposed for election at the 2026 AGM.
- Role of Trustee is advertised on the WWT website.

7. Questions from members

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)/ Entrade Questions:

1. Accounts: Under Balance Sheet Assets, we have £86,305 worth of BNG Credits. Do we have plans to sell these and if so, when? If not, why not?

2. Page 8: What is the nature of WWT's relationship with Entrade. In what ways do we interact and how do we profit? If Entrade take a percentage of the value of a trade, do we share in that? Were any other partners considered? Who else is involved in the Wiltshire Nature Market, who was the recipient of NEIRF funding and how has it been spent?

- *WWT was a project partner with EnTrade in the development of the Bristol Avon Catchment Market (BACM), with funding from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund.*
- *WWT keen to support the emergence of a mechanism that would make it possible for farmers at all scales to access green finance markets by reducing risk and aggregating fractions of BNG units from small parcels of land to meet high volume demand.*
- *Funding for pilot has ended and WWT has been contracted by EnTrade to support farmers in the catchment to develop a pipeline of BNG projects, receiving a fixed fee for projects developed.*
- *Governance of the BACM is overseen by an independent Environmental Markets Board and EnTrade receives a fixed fee as a market operator, not a percentage of trade value.*
- *Any surplus is distributed transparently between farmer suppliers and BNG buyers.*
- *These are Rights to Biodiversity Units which are intended for resale via the Bristol Avon Catchment Market.*
- *It is not proposed to sell these until demand stabilises and grows for BNG, avoiding competing with the supply of BNG projects WWT has supported farmers to develop through the NEIRF.*
- *WWT was the lead recipient of the NEIRF funding and is in partnership with Smart Land Management & Ecology.*
- *Purpose of the project has been to help farmers and land managers of all scales become investment ready for a range of nature market opportunities, with the Entrade marketplace being one potential route to market among others.*
- *NEIRF funding has been used to support in-house ecology team and Simon Smart to carry out baseline ecological surveys, Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMPs), and project design work across participating farms.*
- *Funding also helped to deliver a series of webinars and workshops for participating farmers to share learning and break down barriers to emerging nature markets.*

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Membership Questions:

3. In view of the reference last year to the possibility of in person AGMs, I wonder why this has apparently not been taken up for this years AGM? The AGM used to be an important, well attended event in the annual WWT calendar with excellent presentations and speakers of national repute. It was a very good opportunity for members to meet trustees and staff.

4. Has a final decision been made of the holding of the AGM as at present or in person? If the former, do you think that holding your members as dumb witnesses via YouTube complies with best practice as advised by the Charity Commission? If the latter or some compromise, please can you keep us informed.

- *Discussed by trustees, and the decision to keep it online for this year was made to help with inclusivity and access, as well as the ability to record the meeting and to minimise costs.*
- *WWT will trial a hybrid AGM in 2026 with both an in-person meeting and a live stream to ensure the benefit of inclusivity and access remain.*
- *Move to online voting this year and will continue for 2026.*

Nature Questions:

5. What plans do we have to reduce the now large (150+) population of feral Canada Geese on Langford Lakes? The ecological impact must be significant.

- *Canada Geese are an invasive species introduced as a decorative and game bird on country estates in the 17th century and populations have since exploded with changing agricultural practices and urban growth providing new habitats.*
- *Negative ecological impact for 3 reasons – they drive away native waterfowl; overgraze the shoots and rhizomes of aquatic plants; and their droppings contribute to poor water quality.*
- *Considered a farm pest due to their heavy grazing of vegetation.*
- *Anecdotally, relatively low numbers of breeding geese on site this year with the team observing significant numbers on adjacent estates – WWT will be engaging with neighbours to encourage a joined-up approach to improve chances of success.*
- *Adult birds lack predators, the only option to manage numbers is human control.*
- *Primary approach is egg pricking, which will be done again next Spring, and supplement with live bird control to reduce and disperse the bird numbers significantly enough to improve breeding success for our target species at Langford.*

8. Any Other Business

No other business was raised in advance and no other issues to raise.

Phil closed the meeting by giving thanks to WWT members for participating in AGM and to all supporters who make a huge difference for nature and people in Wiltshire.