

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Ilketshall St Andrew and St John Land Management Company Ltd. held via Zoom on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 7 p.m.**

Present: Tim Basey-Fisher (TB-F) (Chairman)  
John Bedwell (JB) (Secretary)  
Rod Apps (RA)  
Gerald Godfrey (GG)  
Roo Lee (RL)  
Chris Roberts (CR)

There were 5 members of the public

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed the public to the meeting and outlined the evening's format.

**2. Minutes of AGM 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

2.1 The minutes of the AGM of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Chairman's Report**

3.1 When I reported on the Land Management Company's activities at this time last year, it was against a backdrop of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainties in all our lives that were still prevalent at that point, not least due to the fact that the vaccination programme was still in its early stages. The impact of the continuing pandemic on the Commons, and on the work of the Land Management Company, has been much more limited than with many other organisations, and most aspects of its activities have continued as normal. The vast majority of the objectives that were set out in the Management Plan for 2021-2022 have been achieved without disruption.

3.2 A significant activity on the Commons each year is the hay cut. Due to the wet weather over the early part of the summer, this occurred later than in most years, but there was a significantly greater quantity of good quality hay than usual. The weather conditions also gave rise to a greater need for the cutting of the permissive pathways around the Commons.

3.3 The higher-than-average rainfall also boosted the growth of the hedges, and the planned work on the hedges was particularly necessary, but proceeded as intended, with some adjustment due to ground conditions.

3.4 Other routine work has included the clearance of ditches and bunds of sallows and other saplings, and the maintenance of the ditches and bunds themselves, in line with the Management Plan. Vehicular gateways, and pedestrian access points, have been repaired as required, and fallen trees have been removed as necessary. The Board acknowledges, and thanks, the contribution from volunteers in order to complete much of this work.

3.5 The costs of these activities, and all the other activities undertaken by the Land Management Company, have been monitored carefully and the total expenditures during the year ended up being slightly less than the income for the year. The income to the Land Management Company will be less than it has been previously, due to reductions in the income from the government's Basic Payment Scheme, and this progressive reduction will continue until the Scheme runs out completely in 2027.

3.6 Funding remains a concern for the Board, since it is difficult to see how expenditures can be reduced to any significant extent from what they are, given the need to maintain the grassland, hedges, ponds and trees, but the income from the BPS will continue to fall. The Company was invited to continue its participation in the ELS/HLS scheme for a further year, and decided to do so – and therefore the income from that source will continue until January 2023. It is not known at this point whether the scheme will be extended *again*, but clearly the hope is that it will be.

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Signed 

Date 20/02/2023



3.7 At this time, the arrangements for the Environmental Land Management Scheme that is intended to replace the BPS/ELS/HLS schemes remain unclear, and therefore it is not known whether the Commons will be eligible for them or whether they will be appropriate. The Board will therefore continue to monitor the position closely, and to take professional advice regarding funding opportunities. Fortunately, the Commons are in a sound financial position at the current time, but the Board is very aware of the need to take a long-term view in order to preserve the Commons for future generations.

3.8 Following the distribution of a questionnaire in November 2020 regarding long-term priorities for the management of the Commons, the hope was to extend that consultation with other activities and meetings, but the pandemic has made that difficult. The Board therefore decided that it would be appropriate to propose a set of objectives, and these are published in the draft Management Plan for 2022-23. It is hoped that these will provide a basis for discussion and then agreement, while also recognising that there may be a need for some adjustment of those objectives in the light of funding arrangements.

3.9 Work has also continued on the clarification of the boundaries of the Commons, although again not as rapidly as had been hoped due to constraints imposed by the pandemic. It is intended that some significant progress on this issue will be made during 2022.

3.10 The Board has made available its intentions for the next year in the draft Management Plan for March 2022-February 2023. Some comments and suggestions relating to that draft have been received, and along with contributions from the later part of this meeting, will be reflected in amendments to the draft. The Board intends to publish the final version of the Management Plan for next year before the end of the month.

3.11 Overall, the Board believes that it has had another successful year. Subject to any amendments to the Management Plan, it intends to continue with its activities next year in much the same way as last year, and hopes that the various stakeholders in the Commons will support it in doing so.

#### **4. Financial Report**

4.1 The financial report was for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

4.2 The Company started the year beginning 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 with £21,110 in the current a/c and £45,953 on deposit giving total funds of £67,063. During the year, the Company's income, mostly from the Basic Payment System and Stewardship schemes, totalled £13,973 whilst expenditure totalled £12,643. Expenditure included cutting walks, haymaking, spraying thistles, flailing ditches, hedges and pond frontages and maintaining accesses to the commons.

4.3 The Board decided to put more funds on deposit with the result that at the end of the financial year there was £6,691 in the current a/c and £61,703 on deposit giving total funds of £68,394, an increase in funds over the year of £1,331.

4.4. The Board formally received and approved the accounts.

**This concluded the formal business of the AGM.**

#### **5. Open Discussion of Draft Management Plan (DMP)**

5.1 RA introduced the DMP which he said was much the same as last year.

5.2 Sam Brown raised the issue of pond management and CR responded by saying that the LMC was following expert advice.

5.3 RA stated that the LMC will now consider all comments received about the DMP and the finalised plan will be published by the end of February.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 19.41 p.m.

J Bedwell  
Secretary  
18<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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Signed

*G.C. Brown*

Date

20/02/2023