

North Staffordshire National Trust Association
Minutes of the 43rd AGM at the North Staffs Conference Centre, 16th May 2023

Ralph White welcomed members to the AGM. There were 5 apologies.

Chairman's opening remarks: Ralph stated that on the surface the Association was functioning well with a full programme of walks, talks and trips. However declining membership was a concern. Our constitution gave as one of our aims raising money for the National Trust and if lack of support meant that activities failed to function and members were not willing to sit on the committee or organise events we would be unable to do this. We had not made donations for 3 years due to the pandemic. Previously we donated £10,000 a year but only £5,000 was available for this year. The committee need to know what members want. There is no longer the same demand for trips; Ralph's trip to Dyrham Park in September had only 4 applications. Walks are better supported. No one had volunteered to be Vice Chair or Talks Organiser. If this situation continues, in 2 years we will be in difficulties. Ralph asked members to spread the word amongst friends. He thanked Rose Wheat for her years of sterling service as, amongst other things, Vice Chair and Talks Organiser. In response to a member who asked if the committee would consider opening membership to those who were not members of the NT Ralph responded that this was under consideration.

The minutes of the 42nd AGM: were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Secretary's Report: Richard Adams apologised for his absence; his report was read by Ralph. Our membership had dropped from 295 last year to 252 now. Covid will have caused some to lose confidence in going out but the trend is now unmistakable and worrying. On a happier note in the 12 months up to the end of March we enjoyed 24 different events. Early on in the year we hosted Hilary McGrady, Director General of the NT, the first such visit in the 43 years of our Association. There were 7 varied and fascinating talks in this hall plus the AGM. We went on 4 walks, 5 car outings and 3 coach trips. We held two social events and our 5 day holiday to Scotland was a highlight of the year for many of us. Two more coach outings were planned but had to be cancelled; one through insufficient interest and one because of the 40 degree heatwave on the day, another first in the history of our Association! Thanks to everyone involved in creating and running our programme of events, to Marion and her team in continuing to produce a wide range of days out and holidays and special thanks to Rose who has organised so many splendid talks for us all to enjoy.

Treasurer's Report: In Huw's absence Jane Mayer presented the accounts for 2022/23, copies of which have been distributed. Huw commented that this had been a more typical year in that we had had a full range of activities. Subscriptions and donations from members were similar to last year. Surplus on trips included a donation of £800 from Regent Travel re the Scottish holiday. Talks expenses were higher as we paid for 9 lectures as opposed to 5 in the previous year. No donations were requested from the National Trust so none were made. The resulting surplus of £1989 was roughly double that of the previous year. The total reserves rose by almost £2000 to £14373. Huw thanked James Scott of Hardings for examining the accounts again this year. Richard Mayer proposed and Bob Winter seconded that the accounts be accepted. All agreed.

Subscription level for next year: The meeting agreed to keep subscriptions for 2024 at the same level as before, that is £12 for individual members and £8 for further members at the same address.

Approval for re- election: The meeting was asked for approval to waive the requirement in the constitution for committee members to stand down after 5 years. All in favour.

Election of officers and committee: Philip Alcock, proposed by Marion Lycett, seconded by

Richard Adams, was nominated for the committee. All agreed. There were no further new nominations.

The following were put forward for re-election:-

Chair Ralph White

Vice Chair (vacant)

Treasurer Huw Davies

Secretary&
Membership Richard Adams

Committee Roger Cartlidge, Cynthia Dumbelton, Marion Lycett, Jane Mayer,
John Spriggs, Sue Till, Bob Winter

All agreed.

AOB: Richard Mayer thanked the committee for all their work on behalf of the Association.

The meeting closed at 7.28pm.