**Introduction**

On behalf of the Trustees the Chair of Fields in Trust (Jo Barnett) welcomed everyone to the 2024 Fields in Trust Annual General Meeting and looked forward to updating all attending members on the work that Fields in Trust had carried out over the last twelve months.

The meeting was being held virtually with the Chair and trustees in attendance at Clyde & Co’s offices whose facilities were kindly being provided by Ian Ginbey.  All attendees were asked to use the on-screen chat function to raise questions and propose or second motions raised during the meeting.

**2023 AGM meeting minutes**

The Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting were unanimously accepted as read and an accurate record of proceedings having been the proposed by Jeremy Hammond and seconded by Mark Campion.

**Review of 2023 Activity**

Helen Griffiths, CEO of Fields in Trust, provided a review of the highlights of the last twelve months activity. Parks and green spaces play a powerful role in supporting health and wellbeing and create more inclusive communities. Despite this 1 in 3 children aged under 9 don’t have access to playground near their homes.

Over the last year Fields in Trust have continued to contribute to these important debates to try and secure a better future for parks and green spaces and we’re going to share a few highlights from 2023.

**Highlights of our 2023 protection work**

* In 2023 we continued to work side by side with landowners to protect parks and green spaces for the future.
* By building new relationships with 15 local authorities, town and parish councils we increased the number of spaces protected in partnership with Fields in Trust and ensured that more communities have access to a park or green space for generations to come.
* 39 more spaces were protected in perpetuity during 2023 ensuring 140,000 more people within a ten-minute walk of a protected space

**Highlights of our 2023 Supporting work**

Fields in Trust recognise how much communities value their local parks and green spaces and provide advice and support wherever possible. The resources and tools provided help park users and volunteers to navigate lots of issues from holding events to setting up a campaign to protect their local park. During 2023 we provided advice to 900 people and there were over 15,000 visits to our Knowledge Base

**Highlights of our 2023 championing work**

* Fields in Trust’s research shows that 91% of people think that parks and green spaces are more important since the cost-of-living crisis.
* In 2023 the charity continued to invest in data and insight to help make the case for parks and green spaces including producing the annual Green Space Index.

Findings included:

* 6.1 million people have no park or green space within a ten-minute walk from home.
* We will need a further 4,000 new spaces created by 2033 just to maintain the current level of park provision per person
* 8/9 regions in England fall below the recommended amount of green space provision

**2023 Accounts**

Income & Expenditure

* Total income for 2023 was £532k which represented a 4% decrease on total income of £550k in 2022.
* The majority of income in 2023 was unrestricted income at £429k and this included £196k of donations from trusts and foundations and £156k generated from charitable activities.
* Total expenditure for 2023 at £1.3m was similar 2022 and we continued to carefully control our costs for administration and overheads whilst delivering on our core objectives.

Reserves

* At the end of 2023, total reserves stood at £2.2m, a decrease of £600k from the end of 2022.
* Within the 2023 total, the charity’s free reserves totalled **£0.774m** which represents 6 months forward expenditure.
* In addition to these free reserves that represent working capital, the Trustees designate a sum of money as a fields legacy fund that will be used to ensure that the work required in the administration and stewardship of those sites already protected can continue. At the end of 2023, the legacy fund was valued at £0.757m.
* Restricted funds which are given under trust for a specific purpose have fallen from £206k at the end of 2022 to £189k at the end of 2023 as we continue to prioritise spending down these remaining project funds.
* The remaining sums shown on the balance sheet as total reserves are made up from the charity’s fixed assets - £1.5m in 2023

The Treasurer thanked donors for their support and recommended the adoption of the Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 December 2023 and was the proposed by Jeremy Hammond and seconded by Duncan Peake.

**Trustees’ Report and Accounts**

The Trustees’ Report for the year ended 31 December 2023 summarises last year’s key activity and was adopted having been proposed by Ian Ginbey and seconded Mark Campion.

**Elections**

One third of our Council members are due for re-election each year. Retiring Council member **Mark Campion** has agreed to stand again and has been duly proposed and seconded.

The Chair thanked all Council members for their outstanding contributions to our ongoing work.

**Auditors**

The Chair thanked Sayer Vincent LLP who completed the charity’s audit in 2022 and it was proposed they be reappointed as Auditors for next year and their remuneration to be fixed by the Fields in Trust Council. The Proposer was Richard Schuster and the Seconder Jeremy Hammond. Their re-election was unanimously agreed.

**Resolutions**

No suggested resolutions were received from members this year.

**Plans for 2024 and Beyond**

The chair outlines that over the next 12 months we plan to lead the way to a greener future by;

* Influencing policy debate at central and local Government level using our data and insight to demonstrate the value of parks and green spaces and the inequity of provision and the inadequacy of protection
* Increasing the number of people within a 10-minute walk of a protected park or green space.

In 2024 we will also be laying the foundations to mark our centenary in 2025 reflecting on the changes to our landscape over that time and how almost 100 years later our work to champion and protect parks and green spaces is even more relevant now than it was back in 1925.

Some of things we’ve been working on this year will help us achieve these goals including launching a new website, our first ever fundraising campaign and this year’s Green Space Index focussing on children’s access to play space.

With growing concerns about a childhood obesity levels it is alarming to find that 1 in 3 children in Britain (2.3mn) don't have access to any nearby playgrounds and that on average, a single playground in Britain serves 376 children -rising to more than a 1k in more densely populated areas.

Next month we’ll have a new Government in place and a new opportunity to influence our policymakers to get a better deal for our parks and green spaces now and in the future.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all members for their support and the team and the Trustees for everything they have done in the year.

The meeting closed at 1:55pm.