Ecological Land Cooperative

For a living, working countryside

2021 Annual General Meeting of Ecological Land Ltd trading as the Ecological Land Cooperative

Held on Saturday 12th June 2.00 – 3.30pm

Online on the Zoom platform and in person at the Sparkford Inn, Somerset

Minutes

Members Attending: [in person] Lynne Davis (Chair), Holger Westphely, Oli Rodker, Sonia Sinanan, Oliver Bettany, Ruth Munns, [online] Carole Shorney, Elizabeth Cave (on behalf of the Edith Ellis Trust), Adam McCusker, AJ Tear, Alex Wilson, Bryony Allwood, Ben Allwood, Amy Willoughby, Ben Moss, Bettina Davies, Trevor Davies, Billy Smith, Caitlin Flack, Chris Smaje, David Birley, Dominic Elson, Emily Huskins, Chris Huskins, Geraldine Gilbert, Jacky Smith, James Dexter, Sukamala Durance, Jitesh Patel, John Whittick, Sarah Whittick, Julia Hamer-Hunt, Lee Paterson, Margaret Morris, Neil Clark, Peter Budge, Mary Hogan, Peter Devine, Rohan Lewis, Ruth O'Brien, Ruth Youngs, Sandra Aldworth, Sinead Fenton, Stuart Kearney, Tim Beecher, Tony Smetham, Zoe Wangler.

Guests Attending: [in person] Dawn Muspratt, Chris Maughan, Cathy Yexley, Coralie Hopwood, Dylan Lindo Jones, Luci Edwards, Stella Peyerl.

Apologies: Paul Lovatt Smith, Rory Newman, Guy Dehn, Chris Walters, Desmond Lowes, David Hogan, Tom O'Kane, Harriet Kopinska, Ruper Hague-Holmes, Christophe Christiaen, Joy Charnley, Linda and Peter Marshall

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Minutes of AGM held 4th July 2020 approved nem. con.

1. Lynne Davis (Chair) gave an update on the year's activities.

   The final plot at Arlington in Sussex has been sold and Allwood Farm have made amazing progress since moving on in January 2021. ELC has employed 5 new members of staff and has restructured current staff roles following a review in 2020.

   Planning application processes have been significantly affected by the pandemic, meaning lengthy delays to decisions at the sites at Sparkford, Somerset, and Furzehill, the Gower.

   The meeting was shown the new ELC film and videos made by ELC's stewards introducing their farms.

2. Holger Westphely (Treasurer) gave a presentation to explain the figures on the ELC balance sheet and Profit and Loss for 2020.

3. Dawn Muspratt (co-opted member of the Board) and Lynne Davis (Chair) explained that following conversations with ELC Steward and Worker members and a review of the current composition of the Board with regards to the rules of the co-operative, more work needs to be undertaken in reviewing the structure of the board with the intention of gaining greater steward and worker representation.

   Findings of the review will be released ahead of an EGM 6 months after the AGM at which the membership will vote on any outcomes.

   Motion: to delay board elections for 2021 and maintain the current composition of the board pending further review.
   Submitted by the Board of Directors – approved.

4. Oli Rodker (Director) and Holger Westphely (Treasurer) brought forward the proposal, on behalf of the board, to reduce the maximum interest payable on shares in the ELC from 3% to 2%. Any savings (c. £10,000 per annum) made by the ELC will enable the provision of greater financial support for land stewards – possibly by decreasing the interest rate payable on farm leases. The other motive is a desire in line with the fundamental objectives of the ELC to transform land from being a financial asset to a social asset. It was agreed that the vote would be binding for 2021 only and the matter would be revisited at the 2022 AGM.

   Motion: to reduce the maximum annual interest paid on shares in the ELC from 3% to 2% for 2021
   Submitted by the Board of Directors – approved.

5. Motion: to approve the 2020 Financial Accounts
   Submitted by the Board of Directors – approved.

6. Motion: to relieve the need for professional audit of the 2021 financial accounts
   Submitted by the Board of Directors – approved.

7. Appointment of the Social Impact Panel for 2021-22.

   Dominic Elson and Sandra Aldworth (both investor members) volunteered to participate in producing the Social Impact Report for the coming year in collaboration with ELC staff.

   The 2020-21 Social Impact Report will be distributed to members in the coming month.

8. Closing remarks – the Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and closed by commenting on the great work that the ELC is participating in and the privilege to be working with other towards this end.