



**OutdoorLads Ltd**  
**Suite 440**  
**Royal Exchange**  
**Manchester**  
**M2 7EP**

**0161 420 0001**

[www.outdoorlads.com](http://www.outdoorlads.com)

### **OutdoorLads 2024 Annual General Meeting**

**Date: Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2024**

**Location: Britannia Hotel, 35 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3LA**

**The Meeting Opened at 14.48**

**Attended: 107 Total ( 70 at venue, 37 online)**

## **Board Members**

Rob Mitchell (RM) Chair

Joe Bailey (JB) Vice Chair

Jake Higgins (JH) Treasurer

Dan Blackwell (DB) Trustee for Delivery Events

## **Staff Members**

Liam Russell (LR) Also Charity Secretary

Dan Byrnes (DB2)

## **Apologies**

Yvonne Goldsmith-Rybka (Staff), David Norris (Trustee for Members, Volunteers & Staff).  
And Will Allaway.

### **AGM/24/01 Welcome & Housekeeping**

Rob Mitchell welcomed attendees in the room and online, he apologised for the slightly late start due to waiting on numbers in order to reach the quorum of 100 required to conduct the business of the group. He also introduced Naomi, a BSL interpreter hired for the event.

### **AGM/24/02 Governance**

Liam Russell established quorum had been met and made apologies for the delayed start of the meeting. He explained that Full and Concession members in attendance were able to vote, he also talked through the ballot papers for those in the venue, and the voting system for those online.

(Votes were added and results given later in the meeting – they include all proxy votes, plus members in attendance at venue and online.)

All documentation had been provided to attendees prior to the meeting and is available online for any members wishing to view - see Governance homepage on website.

### **AGM/24/03 Approval of the 2023 AGM Minutes**

Proposer: Mark House

Seconder: Tim Hooson

For: 152

Against: 1

Abstain: 14

**Approved**

### **Approval of December 2023 General Meeting Minutes**

Proposer: Tim Lawes

Seconder: Alan Jones

For: 147

Against: 1

Abstain: 16

**Approved**

### **AGM/24/04 Finance**

#### **Overview 2023-2024 Annual Report & Accounts**

Treasurer Jake Higgins presented this section alongside slides summarising a quick snapshot of key points and figures.

2023-2024 was a good year, with the organisation becoming more stable and a small surplus showing by the end. An increase in expenditure was noted – although this was no surprise; and a healthy cash balance reported at the bank with the plan being to re-invest into the website and leader development.

The current year to date shows a similar trajectory, already ahead of budget and reinforcing the long term stability of the charity.

Question: Please explain the green and red figures on the slides?

Answer: JH Green shows income, with red showing expenditure (what we have spent.) The net income is the small surplus – basically income less expenditure, so what is left after all the outgoings.

Question: Why is Gift Aid not offered on membership?

Answer: LR We do not offer Gift Aid on membership as instructed by our accountants – the reason being we cannot claim back Gift Aid if people receive something in return; but we do offer Gift Aid on all donations as advised.

Question: So why can the National Trust offer Gift Aid on their membership?

Answer: LR I don't know is the answer to that. RM We will check with our advisors again in case there have been any amendments to our original advice.

Following the questions there was a vote to approve the 2023-2024 annual report and accounts.

Proposer: James Couldry

Seconder: Andy McKeown-Henshall

For: 148  
 Against: 1  
 Abstain: 13

**Approved**

#### **AGM/24/05 Resolutions**

Liam Russell presented proposed minor changes to the Articles of Association, following the review which is renewed every five years and included on resolution ODL/2004/001. Changes included removing any outdated references, clarifying that quoracy at meetings includes remote attendance, and the reduction of Directors (Trustee) numbers and roles, in line with the changes proposed by the 2023 interim board. Members were asked to vote on the resolution following questions:

Question: What impact will having fewer directors have on the organisation?

Answer: LR It will reduce expense, it will make it more efficient especially in terms of making timely decisions. Each trustee will have a clearer role and responsibilities; and by utilising the sub committees there will be an increased involvement from more members.

Proposer: Liam Russell

Seconder: Joseph Bailey

For: 149

Against: 4

Abstain: 7

**Approved**

#### **AGM/24/06 Election of Trustees**

RM thanked two current trustees who are standing down – Jake Higgins who has now qualified as a chartered accountant and is facing increased responsibility in his day job; and David Norris who fulfilled his lifelong dream of joining the London Gay Men's Chorus, but has more demand on his personal time for rehearsals.

Liam Russell discussed the four new trustee rolls. There was one candidate for each role, each of whom introduced themselves and outlined their reasons for standing for election. Three candidates have already been through the application process and are recommended by the Board to the membership for election. The fourth position of Representative Member Trustee is elected directly by the membership and as such is not interviewed by the board in advance, and is for a one year term.

Members voted for each new trustee with the results being announced later in the meeting.

**Treasurer: Stuart Innes**

Stuart has 22 years of military experience as a senior HR manager in the army. He has experience working with the charity commission and joined OutdoorLads in 2023.

Proposer: Mark Butterworth  
Seconder: Darren Wayne and David Hanley  
For: 151  
Against: 2  
Abstain: 8

**Approved**

**Trustee for Staff & Members: Joe Bailey**

Joe is the current Representative Member Trustee. He has enjoyed his involvement over the last year and is therefore standing for this new role.

Proposer: Matt Tennant  
Seconder: Allan Jones  
For: 144  
Against: 7  
Abstain: 7

**Approved**

**Trustee for Volunteers & Leaders: Gavin Blackman**

Gavin submitted a video as he was attending online; he is a Geography Teacher based in the South and joined OutdoorLads in 2014. He has been a leader since 2015 and has attended over 300 events – mainly walks. He is passionate about helping other members enjoy the outdoors and develop their skills with new leader assessments.

Proposer: Alex Young  
Seconder: Tim Lawes  
For: 147  
Against: 4  
Abstain: 7

**Approved**

**Representative Member: Will Allaway**

Will had also submitted a video as he was not at the AGM due to a prior commitment. He has been a member of OutdoorLads since 2008 and is based centrally in the UK. Having been involved with the delivery subcommittee he now wants to contribute at a higher level. He has not been interviewed by trustees as this role is elected directly by members, and is for a one year term.

Proposer: Oliver Evans

Seconder: James Brunt and Tom Prosser

For: 139

Against: 15

Abstain: 3

**Approved****COMPETITION TIME**

Liam Russell announced that two seats had vouchers taped underneath that could be exchanged for an OutdoorLads hoodie or attendance on any BIG event in 2025.

**Winners: Johnny Williams & Ian Fletcher**

**AGM/24/07 Chair's Address**

After a year of growth, Rob Mitchell thanked the great team of leaders, regional co-ordinators, sub-committees, and trustees, and all that has been achieved over the last year; but highlighted that it was because of the members that we are here. The finances are looking healthy, so we need to re-invest in our members and leaders. There is £10k available to each sub-committee in the coming year in order to keep growing as a membership led charity and deliver more great activities. He encouraged more members to get involved and brings their skills to the table. Rob also applauded the office team and their ongoing input and support.

**AGM/24/08 Actions from Annual Members Survey (Including Sub-Committee Overviews)**

Joe Bailey who co-wrote the survey summarised the results from over 250 members that took part. We all feel proud that OutdoorLads is consistently of benefit to its community with improved mental health and physical fitness and a good sense of community.

Things members would like to see include more events in more areas, increased diversity, to review the refund policy (already completed) , and to make the foundation more accessible.

Website functionality is something that will be addressed as well as more involvement through Telegram and social media in general. An app is not planned as the cost is prohibitive but website improvements are forthcoming.

Sub-committee overviews:

### **Delivery**

This committee has delivered the cultural and heritage events, parkruns and trialling more watersports. They are now looking at leader incentives, and programme for new members for 2025.

### **People**

This committee needs more members, and positions will be advertised soon.

### **Marketing & Communications**

Established after the away weekend earlier in the year and is now getting established with reviewing website content alongside other matters.

### **Sustainability**

This committee has been mothballed for now and responsibility transferred to the trustees.

## **AGM/24/09 Focus on Volunteers**

Dan Blackwell celebrated event numbers in 2024 with the most events led by the most leaders in the entire history of OutdoorLads! Over 17,000 attended events spaces in 2024 is predicted to the end of the year!

In both the Central region and in the North East, event numbers have increased significantly; and the number of active leaders has also increased. Across all regions, event numbers are up, which is great.

By the end of 2024 it is predicted that 210 leaders will have led events, our highest number of leaders in a year ever.

All leaders were thanked with nine prolific event leaders receiving special recognition in the top 3 event categories of Lowland & Hill Walks, Indoor Climbing & Indoor Bouldering. There were also five honorary mentions for people leading the highest number of events across the year.

Dan reached out for more members to get involved and become leaders and explained the benefits and process.

## **AGM/23/10 Members Questions (From Floor/Online)**

Question: To the three staff members, is there any improvement you would like to see or are you happy in your roles?

Answer: LR I feel lucky to have this job, it is so varied and enjoyable and after a shaky couple of years the future is now looking very positive. DB It's a nice job. YGR I love working in our small team and am proud of all OutdoorLads achieves.

Question: What is being done for disabled people to attend events?

Answer: JB All events are run by volunteers and we encourage them to be as accommodating as possible within the confines of the type of event they are running. RM What we can do to make events more accessible is listen; when members contact us prior to events we hope we have met their needs. Today is one example whereby a request was made for an interpreter at the AGM and we made it happen.

Question: What is your five year vision?

Answer: RM We have just emerged from some difficult times and have tried to reach stability, which I believe we have achieved. We want to carry on growing in that way.

Question: Is there a plan to hold next years AGM somewhere else?

Answer: Well we have in the past – in London and Birmingham, but we do have a lot of members based in the North West, not to mention the trustees and staff being based here therefore from a point of view of costs and logistics it does work well in Manchester. But we are always open to suggestions.

Question: Is the OutdoorLads brand outdated?

Answer: We have been questioning a rebrand for some time, but it is not our absolute focus. Maybe over the next few years it will be looked into more seriously, but our brand is well recognised and there are many things to take into consideration before that happens.

Question: Some leaders have put on external activities and set up other groups, often with their own group of friends they met in OutdoorLads, is this becoming a problem?

Answer: RM I personally do not see this as a problem. People naturally form friendships on events and there is nothing wrong in that, their own spin off events are in a way broadening our agenda. Members will always form their own groups, we just need to make sure we keep them involved in OutdoorLads where we can. We are also keen on putting on more events in partnership with other organisations as long as our insurance permits.

Any Questions not answered live will be included in the Q&A Appendix.

### **AGM/24/11 Election Results**

Liam Russell presented the election results as shown within the content of these minutes, and congratulated the new trustees on their successful election.

Liam noted it was fantastic to see so many had voted and shows the good level of engagement members have with the organisation!

### **AGM/24/12 Leader Awards**



Presented by Liam Russell & Mark House. This is the exciting bit that celebrates and acknowledges our leaders and their input. A big thank you to all who were nominated (there were so many) and all the members that nominated them!

The award winners were congratulated by Liam and Mark:

- Stu Innes & David Hanley (Climbing, Nottingham)
- James Watson (Mountain Walk Leader, Glasgow)
- Alex Young (Walk Leader, Surrey)
- David McLeod (Mountain Biking & Hostels, Scotland)
- Andy Hewlett (Mountain Climbing & Scrambling, North Wales)
- Barry Heap (Walk leader & socials).

Special recognition was given to those running the New Member camps at BIG events - David Hanley, Stu Innes, Rich Waterfield, Andy Renault, Will Allaway, Joey Payne, Chris Keivit, Richard Overton, and Steve Clifford. Gavin Blackman also received special recognition for some many nominations for his events in the South East.

#### **AGM/24/13 Any Other Business**

There was no further business. Rob Mitchell thanked all those that attended in person and online, and also to Naomi for interpreting today.

#### **AGM/24/14 Closing Video**

The "For all we are" closing video was played at the end of the meeting.

**The Meeting Closed at 16.22pm**