



Institute of
Chartered
Foresters

Annual General Meeting 2024

Friday 21 June 2024 | 12:00 – 13:00

Online

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Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Appointment of Tellers
2. Minute of the 2023 Annual General Meeting
3. Review of 2023
4. Council Report and Financial Statements
5. Appointment of Auditors
6. Special Resolution to Amend Subscription Rates from January 2025
7. Award of the Silvicultural Prize
8. Election of Honorary Officers and Councillors

Minute of the 2023 Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 25 April at 17.00 at the Edgbaston Stadium, Edgbaston Road, Birmingham, B5 7QU

Present

President (in the Chair): Sharon Durdant-Hollamby FICFor (SD-H)

Vice President: Geraint Richards MVO FICFor (GR)

Executive Director: Louise Simpson (LS)

Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee: Stephen Campbell (SC)

Councillors

Brenda Callaghan MICFor, Michael Cresswell MICFor, Ben Gunneberg MICFor, Dr Gary Kerr FICFor, Andrew Vaughan MICFor and Peter Wilson FICFor.

Members of the Institute

Corporate Members

Dr Sallie Bailey FICFor, David Bole MICFor, Chris Botting MICFor, Sam Brown MICFor, Shireen Chambers FICFor, Fiona Chirnside MICFor, James Colchester MICFor, Paul Dann MICFor, Huw Davies FICFor, Tim Dicker MICFor, David Edwards FICFor, David Ellerby MICFor, Neville Elstone MICFor, Rob Gazzard MICFor, Anthony Geddes MICFor, Martin Glynn FICFor, Mark Gordon MICFor, Elaine Harrison MICFor, Professor John Healey MICFor, Dr Gabriel Hemery FICFor, Roger Horsey MICFor, Doug Howieson MICFor, Shane Lanigan MICFor, Paul Orsi MICFor, Gareth Owen MICFor, Richard Pain MICFor, Iwan Parry MICFor, Richard Paton MICFor, Kevin Penfold MICFor, Lucy Pitt MICFor, Ben Quarcoo MICFor, Steve Scott MICFor, Andrew Sowerby FICFor, Duncan Stone MICFor, Michael Strachan MICFor, Dr Neil Strong MICFor, Dr Eleanor Tew MICFor, Clive Thomas FICFor, Mark Townsend MICFor, Joe Watts FICFor and Roger Worthington MICFor.

Non-Corporate Members

Alex Donaldson, Jen Neilson, Imam Sayyed and George Shortman

1. Apologies

- 1.1 No apologies were received in advance of this meeting.

2. Welcome

- 2.1 SD-H opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

3. Item 1. Appointment of Tellers

- 3.1 Alex Donaldson and George Shortman were appointed as tellers for the meeting.

4. Item 2. Minute of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

4.1 The Minute of the 2022 AGM was published with the Notice of the Meeting and was taken as read. SD-H asked members to approve the minute. Proposed: Michael Cresswell. Seconded by Dr Gary Kerr

4.2 **Outcome: The minute was accepted by a unanimous show of hands.**

4.3 LS outlined the Institute's highlights for 2022, which included: 52 applications for chartered status, membership numbers reaching 2,104 members (a five per cent growth since 2021), delivery of 19 Members' Hours, and over 50 events including: National Conference 22; the National Study Tour; a partner event with DEFRA on seed-sourcing; the National Tree Officers' Conference; and three early career events. These engaged with expert speakers from 14 different countries and were attended by over 2,500 participants. 160+ hours of online CPD resources added to the Members' Area; and nine consultation responses were submitted to influence UK-wide policy.

4.4 The Institute had been sad to say farewell to Shireen Chambers, the previous Executive Director, in 2022 together with Ben Summers-Mckay and Nathaniel Jackson. Five new members of staff had been welcomed in 2022, including two new posts.

4.5 The Institute, in partnership with the Forestry Commission and the University of Cumbria, had developed and launched the UK's first degree-level forestry apprenticeship in 2022, which had been incredibly well-received by the sector.

4.6 A Trees Call to Action Fund grant had been secured by the Institute in 2022. This significant grant aimed to boost the skills and development of tree professionals. The project focused on two initiatives: the first being leadership in the sector, and the Institute was working with Clore Social Leadership on a six-month fellowship programme; and the second on the development of an online accredited UK Forestry Standards Scheme (hopefully to be launched in January 2024).

4.7 A number of Institute members had received awards and honours throughout 2022, including the first ever Professional Forester of the Year Award, which had been presented at the Confor dinner.

4.8 LS expressed thanks to the assessors and other Institute members who had given their support, time and expertise to the Institute this year. LS expressed particular thanks to both Tom Jenkins and Steve McCartney, who had this year stood down from their respective key roles as Moderator and Chair of the Examinations Board. Their unstinting commitment to these roles over many years had been hugely appreciated and they would be greatly missed.

4.9 The Institute's finances had ended 2022 in a healthy position, with a small deficit which would be covered by its reserves. The Institute had received a total income of £856K across its various activities in 2022 and a total expenditure of £873K.

5. Item 4. Independent Auditors Report

5.1 The Audited accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022 were published with the Notice of the Meeting.

- 5.2 SC introduced the accounts and reported that the Institute had ended 2022 in a healthy financial position. He confirmed that there had been no change to the Institute's purpose or objectives during 2022, and it continued to follow its previously published five-year strategy.

6. Item 5. Appointment of Auditors

- 6.1 At the Annual General meeting in April 2022, Azets Holdings Limited were appointed as the Institute's auditors for the year ending December 2022. In June 2022, Azets informed the Institute that their fees would be increasing by at least 30%. As the contract was due for review in 2023, the Institute brought this forward one year and a competitive tender process was undertaken.

- 6.2 Seven firms were shortlisted and four were invited to tender and interview. Three firms accepted the invitation (including Azets). On the 7 September 2022, however, Azets confirmed that they had not been given clearance from their resourcing teams and would be unable to complete the Institute's year end 2022 audit. This was followed by their official resignation as our auditors on Monday 12 September 2022.

- 6.3 In accordance with the Institute's Bylaws, the auditors are appointed at the AGM. Council noted, however, that it would not be possible to wait until April 2023 as the year end accounts needed to be completed in early 2023. Council, at its meeting on 6 October 2022, therefore, agreed to appoint Chiene & Tate as auditors from 25 October 2022 for an interim period, to be reappointed formally by the AGM in April 2023. The Audit for 2022 has been completed successfully.

- 6.4 SD-H proposed that Chiene & Tait, therefore, be re-appointed as the Institute's auditors for 2023 and noted that this resolution required approval by 50% of those voting. Proposed: Ben Gunneberg. Seconded: Huw Davies.

- 6.5 Corporate members present who had not yet voted online voted unanimously in favour.

- 6.6 258 votes had been cast online or by post (30% turnout): 225 in favour, 1 against, and 32 (32 online and 0 postal) had given the chair their proxy. A total of 276 (99.6%) votes in favour approved this motion.

- 6.7 **Outcome: members voted to appoint Chiene & Tait as the Institute's auditors in 2023.**

7 Item 6. Appointment of Trustees to the Educational & Scientific Trust

- 7.1 As there were two candidates standing for one vacancy, there had been a ballot. LS confirmed that all votes cast by the due date had been counted (with a 36% turnout) and that the number of votes for each candidate was as follows: Dr Sallie Bailey (174); Dr Julia Garritt (143).

- 7.2 **Outcome: Dr Sallie Bailey was declared duly elected.**

- 7.3 The existing members of the Trust were noted to be David Edwards FICFor (Chair) and the ICF President and Vice President (both *ex officio*). David Edwards' current term of office would end at the AGM 2024.

8. Special Resolution to Amend Subscription Rates from January 2023

- 8.1 In March 2023, Council had discussed the current economic conditions and recognised that inflation had continued to increase rapidly in the past year with the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rising by 8.8% in the 12 months to January

2023, down from 9.2% in December 2022. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to January 2023, down from 10.5% in December 2022.

- 8.2 Council recognised that increasing the rates of membership subscription in line with inflation allows the Institute to grow to meet members' demands for improved services, meet the rising costs from suppliers, and apply an appropriate balanced approach to our growth, as outlined in our strategy. The Institute is a not-for-profit organisation, and its financial aim was to generate a small surplus to be able to reinvest in our services and continue to grow.
- 8.3 Council also recognised that members were facing the same economic pressures and felt that setting subscription rates at the current rate of inflation may put too much financial pressure on our members. After careful consideration and debate, Council requested from the membership the opportunity to delay setting subscription rates for 2024 until later in the year. This would allow Council to assess 2024 budgets alongside the current economic conditions and find the right balance between meeting the rising costs for the Institute and meeting the needs of our membership.
- 8.4 Council appreciated that the members require a level of certainty and, therefore, in accordance with Bylaw 30, proposed the following:
'For subscriptions fees 2024, the amount of any increase shall be determined conclusively by Council but shall be no more than 5% or the current Consumer Price Index at the end of August 2023, whichever is lower, or no more than a three per cent increase if there is no annual increase or a decrease in the Consumer Price Index. The Council shall give the members written notice of the amount of increase in the subscription fee no later than 30th November 2023. If the Council fails to give such notice, then subscription fees may not be increased until 30 days after which such notice is given'.
- 8.5 SD-H noted that a Special Resolution must be supported by three fourths of those Corporate Members voting
- 8.6 SD-H proposed that the Special Resolution be taken as read. Proposer: Peter Wilson. Seconder: Ben Gunneberg.
- 8.7 Corporate members present who had not yet voted online voted unanimously in favour.
- 8.8 258 members had voted online or by post (30% turnout): 201 in favour, 27 against, 30 (30 online and 0 postal) had given the chair their proxy. A total of 270 votes had been cast, with 251 in favour.
- 8.9 **Outcome: members voted with a 90.2% majority to approve the special resolution to increase subscription rates for 2024, as outline in minute 8.4 above.**
9. **Item 8. Award of the 2022 Silvicultural Prize**
- 9.1 SD-H announced that the 2022 Silvicultural Prize (the Percy Stubbs & John Bolton King & Edward Garfitt Prize for Silviculture) has been awarded to Dr David I. Forrester for the paper *Growth and structural changes in Swiss uneven-aged forests over 100 years, and comparisons between 15 uneven-aged forest types of Europe, North America and Australia* published in *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*, Volume 95, Issue 2.

- 9.2 The editors thought this paper a well-deserved winner because the authors have compiled an impressive dataset on uneven-aged forests which allowed them to examine long-term changes (> 100 years) in growth and stand structure of numerous planter forests across Switzerland. They additionally put their results into the context of published data on plenter forests across the world which makes the findings relevant for forest scientists and managers across the world. The insights of the study can be used as a guide for converting stands with a simple forest structure into uneven-aged plenter forests. This is relevant since plenter forests bring along several important advantages with respect to the sustainability of ecosystem services and may be a particularly interesting option if the aim of forest managers is to simultaneously match the demands that numerous stakeholders have for forests.

10. Election of Honorary Officers and Councillors

Election of Honorary Officers

- 10.1 The Secretary informed members that there had been one nomination for President and one for Vice President. The Secretary thus announced Geraint Richards MVO FICFor duly elected as President and Andrew Sowerby FICFor duly elected as Vice President for one year from the close of the meeting.

Election of Councillors

- 10.2 Election of Fellows - There were three candidates for three vacancies for Fellows on Council. The Secretary therefore announced that John Browne FICFor, Mike Cresswell FICFor and Dr Gary Kerr FICFor were duly elected to Council.
- 10.3 Election of Professional Members - There were two candidates for two vacancies for Professional Members on Council. The Secretary therefore announced that Brendan Callaghan MICFor and Elaine Harrison MICFor were duly elected to Council.

11. Next General Meeting

- 11.1 This next Annual General Meeting would be announced in due course.
- 11.2 LS took the opportunity, on behalf of staff and members of the Institute, to thank Sharon for her valuable contributions, support and guidance during her eight years of service as a member of Council and then President.

SD-H declared the meeting closed.

[END]

Review of 2023

(Agenda item 3)

The President will speak to this item. Please refer to enclosed document.

Council Report & Financial Statements

(Agenda item 4)

The President and Councillors will speak to this item. Please refer to enclosed document.

Appointment of Auditors

(Agenda Item 5)

Following a competitive tender process in 2022, Chiene & Tait were appointed as the Institute's Auditor and Accountancy Services Firm. Following the satisfactory completion of the 2022 year end audit, Chiene & Tait were reappointed for a further year at the 2023 AGM.

The Audit for 2023 has been completed successfully.

The Council, on the recommendation of the Finance and Audit Committee, therefore, proposes that Chiene & Tait be appointed as auditors of the Institute for Year End 2024.

Special Resolution to Amend Subscription Rates from January 2025

(Agenda Item 6)

Subscription Rates 2025

In 2023, the members approved a Council resolution to postpone the determination of subscription rates until the Council's September meeting, recognising the unstable financial climate. A 5% cap was established to provide members with assurance regarding the maximum possible increase in subscription rates. In September 2023, with a more precise understanding of the financial situation, the Council implemented a varied increase across membership categories, ensuring that the overall increase did not exceed 4%.

Given the ever-changing economic landscape¹, the Institute finds itself in a similar situation as last year, where it is premature to establish the subscription rates for 2025. After considered deliberation, the Council is seeking permission from the members to postpone the determination of the 2025 subscription rates until later this year. This delay will enable the Council to evaluate the 2025 budgets considering the prevailing economic conditions and strike an optimal balance between covering the Institute's costs and addressing our members' needs. We understand our members' need for certainty and, in line with Bylaw 30, the Council proposes the following:

'For Subscription fees 2025, the amount of any increase shall be determined conclusively by Council but shall be no more than 4% or the current Consumer Price Index at the end of August 2024, whichever is lower or, no more than 3% increase if there is no annual increase or a decrease in the Consumer Price Index. The Council shall give the members written notice of the amount of increase in the Subscription fee no later than 30 November 2024. If the Council fails to give such notice, then Subscription Fees may not be increased until 30 days after which such notice is given'.

¹ The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 4.2% in the 12 months to January 2024, the same rate as December 2023. The CPI rose by 4% in the 12 months to January 2024, the same rate as December 2023.

For February, CPIH rose to 3.8%, SPI 3.4% and for March CPIH remained at 3.8% with CPI at 3.2%.

At the Institute we are seeing a lot of our suppliers increasing their prices by inflation plus 2-4%.

Award of the Silvicultural Prize

(Agenda Item 7)

In accordance with Regulation 79, Council, at its meeting in April 2024, approved the award of The 2023 Percy Stubbs and John Bolton King and Edward Garfitt Prize for Silviculture (Silvicultural Prize) to:

Dr Guillaume Moreau for the paper ***Simplified tree marking guidelines enhance value recovery as well as stand vigour in northern hardwood forests under selection management***, developed with Catherine Chagnon, Malcolm J L Cecil-Cockwell, David Pothier, Alexis Achim, Steve Bédard, François Guillemette and John Caspersen, published in *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*.

The Editors thought this paper a well-deserved winner of the Silvicultural Prize because the authors present a study which is not only scientifically interesting and sound but also of highly practical value. The study assesses existing tree marking guidelines for logging operations in northern hardwood forests in Eastern Canada under selection cutting management regimes. The study compares the performance of currently applied guidelines with alternative, simplified science-informed tree marking strategies. The authors convincingly demonstrate that a simplified tree marking system based on the most recent advances in understanding the impacts of tree defects on tree vigour and wood quality, can facilitate stand improvement notably by removing a greater proportion of low-vigour trees and recovering significantly more value at the stand scale. One key action of the newly suggested guideline is to prioritize the removal of trees with crown dieback (even if the dieback is relatively small > 15%). The study is based on data from 14 stands across a large environmental gradient which makes the findings representative for a large geographic region. The methodical approach which includes marking simulations based on the detailed individual tree information available from before and after selected logging operations is an elegant solution for an otherwise hard to conduct study.

Office Bearers & Councillor Nominations

(Agenda item 8)

Councillors

For information, the relevant Bylaw/Regulations are:

- (a) **Bylaw 37:** The Council shall consist of the President and Vice-President, both of whom shall be ex officio members, together with such number of Corporate Members **not exceeding twelve and not less than four** in number as may be prescribed by Regulations
- (b) **Regulation 34:** The elected members of Council, other than the Honorary Officers, shall consist of:
 - i. **Up to five Fellows** of the Institute
 - ii. **Up to seven** Professional or Technical Members of the Institute

The following have been nominated for election as Councillor for the period commencing at the close of the Annual General Meeting 2023 to the close of the Annual General Meeting in 2025.

Fellows

There are two candidates for two vacancies so both will be declared elected at the AGM.

Candidate	Nominator 1	Nominator 2
Harrison, Craig FICFor	Mumford, Justin FICFor	Penfold, Kevin MICFor
Glynn, Martin FICFor	Kerr, Gary (Dr) FICFor	Chambers, Shireen FICFor

Professional Members

There are six candidates for five vacancies. The result of the ballot will be declared at the meeting.

Candidate	Nominator 1	Nominator 2
Ellis, Jo MICFor	Gough, Nick MICFor	Prest, Graeme MICFor
Fitzgerald, Kate MICFor	Barratt, Tim, MICFor	Drewett, Tom MICFor
Geddes, Anthony MICFor	Sowerby, Andrew FICFor	Cresswell, Mike FICFor
Gunneberg, Benjamin MICFor (for re-election)	Wilson, Peter FICFor	Browne, John FICFor
Heuch, Jon MICFor	Edwards, David FICFor	Pendlebury, James (Professor) MICFor
Worsey-Buck, Pherenice MICFor	Durdant-Hollamby, Sharon FICFor	Harrison, Craig FICFor

Co-opted Members

For information, Peter Wilson FICFor and Stephen Campbell were both co-opted for a second two-year term by Council at its meeting on 18 April 2024.

In accordance with Regulation 38, Council has power to co-opt in any year up to three individuals (may be members or non-members of the Institute), to ensure a diverse Council with a balance of different backgrounds, skills and experience, to serve as Additional Councillors for not more than two years.

Additional Councillors shall be eligible for co-option again for a second term but shall not serve in this capacity for more than four consecutive years.