



# Proxy & corporate action support – case study

## proxy:tracker

**Client:** Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc

**Project:** Proxy & corporate action support

### Background

Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc (“ASCoT”) published their 2007 Annual Report and Notice of Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 29th January 2008. Within the Notice of Meeting was a resolution that the Company continue to manage its affairs as an investment trust. This resolution is put to shareholders every 3 years and ASCoT was keen to raise awareness among its shareholders that a) this resolution had been proposed; and b) they had plenty of time to place their votes ahead of the deadline at 18.15 on Sunday 2nd March 2008. The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday 4th March 2008.

### What we did

Unlike many of the projects we work on, which tend to be more widely based, the focus of our activity on this project was the back office of nominee companies. RD:IR has analysed ASCoT’s register since 2003 so we are totally familiar with the shareholder base. Our experience in proxy solicitation means we have a large database of proxy and corporate action contacts, and the combination put us in a perfect place to target the right people efficiently and effectively.

Within a few days of the publication date, we put an experienced dedicated proxy research manager, Yolande Lundy, on the case. Yolande followed up with the nominee companies ensuring they were aware of

the continuation vote, had the correct paperwork and knew the relevant process for submitting their votes plus the deadline for receipt of these votes.

A significant proportion of ASCoT’s shares are held by private client stock broker fund managers and institutional investors. While Yolande was busy talking to nominee companies, ASCoT was talking to the front offices of these firms. Regular cross-referencing of what we knew to be fund managers’ instructions to their nominees, and the actual votes ensured that we could identify any procedural break-downs and quickly follow them through.

Our intimate knowledge of the register was a great help when matching votes to the correct fund manager. A daily voting report was provided by the registrars in the morning which was matched to the share register and returned by mid-afternoon, ensuring all members of the team could closely track progress.

The process continued with varying degrees of intensity until the Friday before the Annual General Meeting.

### Outcome

On 5th March, ASCoT announced to the market that all resolutions proposed at the Annual General Meeting had been passed and that the votes, represented by proxy and corporate representatives, totalled c58% of its shares in issue.

“ The team at RD:IR did a great job in assisting us achieve a high level of awareness of the AGM. ”