

Minutes of the 3rd Annual General Meeting

of Herefordshire Walking

Wednesday, 5th October, 2016 at 7.00pm

Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green Hereford

Present: Steve Dennis, Sue Dennis, Marika Kovacs, Nic Howes, John Wride, Roger Lowery, Teresa Nahajski, Richard Westlake, David Hawkins, David Seeney, Chris Dunn, Martin & Anthea Hebblethwaite, John Winterfeld, Liz Hill, Arthur Lee, Lisa Richardson.

Apologies: Philip & Christine Williams, Philip Bauer, Rachel Hicks, Rex Eckley, Heather Hurley, Tony Norman, Les Lumsdon, Christine Hope, Tim Hoverd, Andy & Karen Johnson, Nick Eve, Jenny Williams, Chris Over, John Dawson, Andree Poppleston, Mike Ledlie, Jackie Denman, Geoff & Patsy Cooper, Garth Lawson.

Arthur Lee welcomed all to the third AGM of Herefordshire Walking, There were 22 apologies and the list was open to anyone for inspection. The agenda and supporting documents were in their packs and it was planned to deal with the formal part of the proceedings including the reports of the 15th Herefordshire Walking Festival, before moving on to the buffet and discussion of plans and ideas for the 2017 Herefordshire Walking Festival. Those present introduced themselves briefly.

Minutes & Matters Arising: The minutes of the last AGM were accepted as being a true record of the proceedings and there no matters arising. David Hawkins praised the attainment of 50% of participants coming from outside the county.

Proposed by Roger Lowery and **seconded** by Steve Dennis. Carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report:

This year's Festival had gone extremely well with mostly excellent weather. His thanks went out to the many people who made the running of the 2016 festival possible and successful, sponsors Steve and Sue, Lisa who does all the work and our small committee who meet regularly to co-ordinate all the efforts to make it happen. Many thanks also to all the festival walk leaders & back-markers and those who buy tickets and participate on the walks and in particular a group of Rambler volunteers who worked valiantly for many hours in the whole week prior to the festival, repairing stile cross-steps and installing stiles. Special thanks to Steve from Balfour Beatty who installed a new footbridge in Cradley, making the Wyche Way walk possible. He hoped that the work done by these volunteers was appreciated while walking during the festival.

He appealed to all walk leaders who plan to lead walks for the 2017 festival, to return to Lisa the walk routes and footpath reports so that the Ramblers volunteers have a little more time to resolve any issues, rather than trying to do all the practical work in the week before the festival.

He manned the Emergency phone again this year, NO issues to report and again met 15 of the festival walks, either at the start, mid walk or at the end of the walk.

He thanked everyone for coming and invited them to enjoy the buffet later, before the discussion of ideas for 2017.

Festival Report & Accounts

There were 46 walks - 9 more than last year, eight of which were fully booked and 125 more tickets were sold. Four walks did not run – Nordic Walking – always very difficult to sell; the Dutch Rehearsal – a new idea but 20 miles was obviously a few miles too far; WildWalk with Wild Play for children had no takers and Puddles to Ponds only had 3 but there was a very enthusiastic response from those; two people booked the cycle walk, which was another first with a cycle ride to Berrington Hall to chime with the Capability Brown anniversary but cancelled.

The feedback forms were personalised this year so that each walker had only one form listing all the walks chosen so exact comparison with previous years wasn't possible. Thirty-five percent of the total walkers came from outside the county, the number of solo walkers had increased as had the number of bookings via the website. One walker had walked each of the nine days but the majority did either one or two walks during the festival.

Three leaders ran into medical problems at the last minute but many thanks to Kington Walking Festival for stepping in to cover for Rob Dingle. The organiser of Hay's four walks had to withdraw but they found other leaders and Lisal backmarked where necessary and when Garth Lawson pulled his right cruciate ligament, Robin Thorndyke, the Brian Hatton expert, took over.

Poetry walks included returned to the programme and went well. Homme House & Harewood End romped away. The Rotherwas & Dinedor walks were very successful and the Ledbury Food Walk linked us into other food groups, particularly in Gloucestershire as did the Colwall Orchard walk, which is perhaps a pointer to how we can market the walks in the future.

Reading the feedback, the teas were all delicious, as was lunch in Pembridge. Specialist subjects, experts in their field and the chance to visit private venues, all do extremely well – on the Hay Railway Tour, which was overbooked, 8 of the 17 walkers were outside the county, including 3 from Crewe.

Three email newsletters again, there was coverage in the Sun plus a very good advert in the Hereford Times worked well but a week of radio ads with Sunshine Radio didn't seem to have any effect, there was no response from BBC Hfd & Worcs. or Herefordshire Live, in spite of valiant efforts by Arthur. Liz continued her good work and Facebook likes were now 131 v. 104 last year with 751 Twitter followers 556 in 2015. There was good brochure distribution around the county but Hereford really suffers from no Tourist Information Centre although we did have two full days under a gazebo at the Old Market & a supply in Liz's carousel in the Butter Market.

The income & expenditure to date was circulated. Total cost was £4,832.97 and income was £3,166.75 leaving a shortfall of £1,666.22 as against £1,627.38 last year, which was excellent bearing in mind that the design & printing costs were up a little, £320 more was spent on advertising & postage, the £328 cost of the AGM was included and there was £135 less income in advertising.

So, we're looking for walks in by the beginning/mid December, to the printer after the Christmas break, packed and out by the end of January. The 2016 form is in your pack, so all we need now are your ideas.

Adoption of the accounts was **proposed** by David Hawkins, **seconded** by John Wride & carried unanimously.

Election of Committee & Officers

No-one coming forward for the Chairmanship or other officers or to join the committee, the existing members were elected en bloc as follows:

Chair: Arthur Lee

Secretary/Treasurer: Lisa Richardson

Committee Members:

Publicity: Liz Hill

Sponsors: Steve & Sue Dennis

Proposed by, Marika Kovacs **seconded** by Nic Howes & carried unanimously.

Any Other Business:

- Heart Start, Nic Howes had occasion to make use of his Heart Start training during the past year and his feedback to Heart Start identified his annual training with the Walking Festival.

- Nic Howes expressed his thanks to the committee for all their hard work in running the festival and to Steve & Sue Dennis for their sponsorship, without which none of this would be happening. Echoed unanimously.

Arthur thanked everyone for coming and invited them to enjoy the buffet before the discussion of ideas for 2017 and closed the Annual General Meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: to be held within five weeks of 30th September 2017, exact date to be advised.

2017 Ideas

- Geocaching & navigation “give confidence to map read”
- Orienteering
- Invite personalities, such as Michael Burke or Jo Brand to launch the festival
- Marika to invite Clare Balding to pre-walk a walk for the Festival
- Invite the local MP to join a walk – more difficult now that Jesse Norman has ministerial responsibilities.
- Get the 2017 brochures to David Seeney as soon as published as he will take them to RAF Cosford/Gordon Green Walks.
- Wye Valley Walk as the long distance walk for 2017, in 4 or 5 sections although Lydbrook Bridge was now closed (check). The Herefordshire Trail was proposed as an alternative.
- Nightjar walk in the Forest of Dean
- Summer solstice walk from Garway
- Excalibur would repeat the 20 mile walk but broken into two 10 mile sections with walkers able to leave & catch the bus back to Hereford at the Hoarwithy lunch stop. A weekend walk
- Three Castles Walk
- A walk to include the highest point in Herefordshire (703) metres plus Black Darren, as featured in the film ‘Leave to Remain’.
- Teddy Bears Picnic. Weekend & publicity flier in the schoolbags.
- Old Radnor to Kington – 9/10 miles and bus back.