

## **Minutes of the 2nd Annual General Meeting**

of Herefordshire Walking

Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 at 7.00pm

Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green Hereford

**Present:** Steve Dennis, Sue Dennis, Rachel Hicks, Rex Eckley, Heather & Jon Hurley, Ian Foster, Marika Kovacs, Nic Howes, John & Ruth Wride, Roger Lowery, Tony Norman, Ann Stanier, Teresa Nahajski, Mike Walker, Liz Hill, Arthur Lee, Lisa Richardson.

**Apologies:** Philip & Christine Williams, Philip Bauer, Mary Howcroft, David Hawkins, Les Lumsdon, Sarah Sawyer, Christine Hope, Tim Hoverd, Andy & Karen Johnson, Bob Selmes, Clive & Cynthia Prior, Tom Fisher, Rachel Price-Greenow, Will Steele, Lucinda James, Norman Stanier & Robert Williams.

Arthur Lee welcomed all to the second AGM of Herefordshire Walking & read out the apologies. 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 14th Herefordshire Walking Festival, before moving on to the buffet and discussion of plans and ideas for the 2016 Herefordshire Walking Festival.

**Minutes & Matters Arising:** The minutes of the last AGM were accepted as being a true record of the proceedings and there no matters arising.

**Proposed** by Nic Howes and **seconded** by John Wride. Carried unanimously.

### **Festival Report & Accounts**

Ticket sales were up on last year last year and just under 50% of the bookings were made from outside the county. Three walks were cancelled, one due to bus timetable changes and the other two due to unavailability of the two specialist leaders. The programme had 37 walks, six more than last year and three of which were fully booked. The wonderful opportunity to visit the Leen sold out almost as fast as the brochures hit the doormats, Clive & Cynthia Prior in Leintwardine work their magic each year and the Castles of the Golden Valley topped up the Hay Ho! bus with 20 walkers. Castles again with those of the River Monnow only having 1 place left. The farming walks on Turnastone Court and Hopes of Longtown did very well – With her new baby in tow, Christine plans to expand hers to Through the Eyes of the Farmers Daughter & Granddaughter next year. Which repeats the message that specialist subjects and the opportunity to walk on private land plus anything that ends in ‘tea’ is v. attractive. We continued the tradition of breaking new ground with ‘Trans-missions’- an internet walk - a solo walk following powerlines & pylons crossing the county, (think Alfred Watkins & Old Straight Track) which could be followed on the internet worldwide & was celebrated with a party in Dragon Orchard at the end of the festival.

Three email newsletters had gone out : Liz had carried on her sterling work on Facebook & Twitter and from 77 Facebook likes & 180 Twitter followers in 2014, we now had 104 on Facebook & 556 on Twitter. Sharon Chilcott had written a good article in Live 24/7 ‘Walk’ had featured the festival in the summer edition; the press release had resulted in a good write-up in the Hereford Times and excellent positioning of the advertisement. It featured in Top Sante magazine & on the Herefordshire Council website. John Wride had put up substantial coverage on the Ramblers website. The Festival pop-up was displayed in the window of No.1 King Street facing Broad Street.

BBC Hfd. & Worcs. had run an interview during the Festival week. Brochure supplies were delivered to the county's TICs plus Malvern & Monmouth & regularly topped up in the library, in walking equipment suppliers and were displayed in Liz's carousel in the Butter Market, six days a week. The Old Market kindly offered us a gazebo for a day, a week before the festival. This could be something we could utilise a little more for next year.

The accounts show what a marvellous difference the very generous sponsorship of Steve & Sue has made. Accommodation adverts on the web doubled and there was paid advertising in the brochure for the first time. The brochure was larger than last year & 1,000 more were printed (6,000) The mailing list was 3,239 most of which were posted – most Hereford addresses were delivered by hand. Heartstart training cost more as they did two more private sessions & we had to hire a room but it is a festival essential. The total cost of the festival plus the cost of this AGM will be almost the £5,000 but was less than 2014 and the income was more even when the AGM costs are deducted, so with the help of our sponsors, we are well on our way for the next year. Hopefully European funding will be back on track in 2016 & we will be able to take advantage of the tourism provision, particularly if some match funding is needed.

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 Roger Lowery, **seconded** by Nic Howes & 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

Walking with Offa: Lucinda James

**Proposed** by Marika Kovacs, **seconded** by Rachel Hicks & carried unanimously.

#### **Chairman's Report:**

The Festival had gone extremely well with excellent weather. He had taken over responsibility for the emergency phone this year and each day had met a walk at the start, at the middle or end and had gathered feedback from walkers and leaders. This had been really appreciated and he planned to do it again next year. Most of the problems on the walks had been dealt with before the festival either by the Ramblers or by Balfour Beatty. Balfour Beatty have offered to provide maps so that the location of problems can be more easily pinpointed but that would obviously need the routes to be firmed up well in advance or at least the general areas of the walks. Arthur welcomed Mike Walker from Balfour Beatty, the new PROW officer.

Mike had moved from Bucks. to Herefordshire and settled in Fownhope and although he didn't know the Herefordshire paths, he did have 30 years of experience behind him. He reiterated the advice to get walk defect problems in as early as possible and acknowledges our mutual interest in encouraging as many as possible to walk and enjoy our countryside.

From the floor, 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 2016 and closed the Annual General Meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting:** to be held within five weeks of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016, exact date to be advised.