**LDWA BEDS BUCKS & NORTHANTS : AGM 2019
REPORTS**

**Chairman – Terry Brown**

I’m giving a brief overview of the Group’s activities and happenings for our reporting year - 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019; more detailed reports have been written by those directly involved.

We were saddened to hear that Sybil Davies, BBN founder member and former Walks Secretary and Chairman, had passed away in January, a day before her 90th birthday. Interesting tributes were written about her love of walking and maps, her exploits in the Group’s early days and her friendship with John Nickerson. It was fitting that a plaque for Sybil was added to the BBN Founders’ memorial bench at Ivinghoe to go alongside the plaque for John that had been attached earlier in the year.

Your Committee – myself, Peter Simon, Peter Engledow, Gill Bunker, Mary Knight, Dave Findel-Hawkins, Alan Leadbetter, Roy Carter and Sara Waldron – met formally 3 times during the year to steer the Group’s activities and respond to requirements of the LDWA’s National Executive Committee. Also, where necessary, we acted quickly to resolve situations that required immediate attention; making and agreeing decisions by email communication between us. I would like to thank the Committee for their excellent work, continued support and encouragement. I can honestly say that working with all of them has been an absolute pleasure.

Communications - we continued to provide members with information, updates and news through Peter Simon’s weekly emails, the BBN website and Facebook. Many thanks to Peter and Gill Bunker who do most of this work. Gill also produced 3 excellent newsletters, took the minutes at our Committee meetings and AGM, uploaded our walks programme for Strider and kept our website up to date! Peter Engledow has taken on our Twitter account management and our presence in this forum is steadily growing.

We’ve had a frustrating year with recurring glitches in the LDWA bulk emailing facility which has meant that some members have emails from LDWA addresses going into spam mail boxes. We’re concerned that some may not realise there’s a problem and could have missed out on our comms. Peter Simon has raised this several times with Adam Dawson, LDWA IT lead, who has provided some fixes which work for a short time but the LDWA’s IT supplier seems to have run out of ideas for a permanent solution to this problem. We will continue to find ‘work arounds’ to this problem.

Finance – many thanks to Peter Engledow for looking after our finances which, the accounts show, are in a stable position. We’ve been able to make some donations this year which have all been well received. Future spending plans include a Greensand Ridge bench replacement project, BBN marshal T shirts, new banners and handout cards.

Social walks – we’ve had an excellent, varied programme of Thursday and weekend social walks again this year. Thanks to Mary Knight for coordinating the programme and to everyone who has led a walk. We introduced an ‘available walk dates’ page on our website (also published in the newsletter) so that everyone can see walk dates well in advance. Dates without leaders by Strider publication deadline are now entered as ‘To be arranged’ using the website to provide updated details when available. This appears to be working well. As ever, we would welcome some new faces as walk leaders - if you haven’t led a walk before please consider having a go. We can support first timers on route planning and leading.

This year we’ve started to record walker’s name/membership number/emergency contact details on our social walks as required by the LDWA’s insurers. We are doing this in a way that doesn’t compromise data protection and privacy rules and is quite straightforward to administer. Thanks to Merrian Lancaster and walk leaders, for information gathering, Dave Findel-Hawkins, for information handling, and to all members for cooperating on this matter.

Challenge events – we held three successful events in the reporting year – the Sundon Saunter (Nov 2018), the Chiltern Kanter (March 2019) and the Hannington Hike (June 2019). We always get feedback from entrants thanking us for our good route descriptions, great checkpoint food and friendly and supportive marshals. This hasn’t happened by chance! The organisers (and other helpers) put in many hours of planning before the day and, with the marshals, work very hard on the day.

Thanks to main organisers - Merrian Lancaster, Dave Findel-Hawkins, Lynn and Dave Yorston, Mike and Sandra Hyland, Norman Corrin and Alan Leadbetter, and to those who marshalled or helped in any other way, especially to those who helped for the first time - very well done.

Special thanks to Mike Hyland our ‘Event Entries Manager’ who deals with the entries on all our events which are now all hosted on SiEntries. Most entrants use this facility which is great for data protection and communication purposes and makes Mike’s job much more straightforward.

Having organised the Chiltern Kanter for many years, Norman Corrin has now stepped down so the event in March was his last. I’m pleased to say that Roy Carter has agreed to take this event over and has already started planning the next one in 2021. Many thanks to Norman for all his work on this event over the years and to Roy for taking on the Challenge!

During the year it was agreed that the Hannington Hike will move to March and alternate with the Chiltern Kanter and the Pick and Mix will be held annually around the end of May beginning of June, taking into effect from 2020.

Other Group activities - our thanks go to Dee Brockway for organising a trip to the Isle of Wight in October. Many thanks Jill Green and Jim Catchpole, for organising transport and leading the walks on the 74-mile Vectis Trail. Although unable to go myself, I gather that the trip was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

LDWA 100-mile challenge event - we didn’t have a Group checkpoint on this year’s LDWA Hadrian Hundred but Dave Findel-Hawkins and Merrian Lancaster looked after their ‘checkpoint before the end’ again and several members helped here and at other Groups’ checkpoints. Congratulations to all BBN members and Associates who completed the marshals or main walk and commiserations to those who had to retire. Special mention must be made of Brian Layton who completed his 20th Hundred and Dee Brockway who completed her 10th.

Thanks to Dave F-H who is the BBN contact for whichever group is organising the 100 event and to Mary Knight for organising the BBN checkpoint at Abergavenny on next year’s Y 100 Sir Fynwy. We have expressed an interest in running a Group checkpoint for at least the next few years.

Thanks to everybody who does a ‘little job’ for the Group, for example Lynn and Dave Yorston keep our equipment list up to date and store a large proportion of it, Norman Corrin who contacts all our new members by phone and email to welcome them to the Group and Merrian Lancaster who hands out LDWA leaflets and BBN cards to everyone she meets, comes up with good ideas often gleaned from talking to other Groups around the county and who looks after our historic challenge event records and makes sure these comply with data protection and privacy rules.

Finally, I’d like to thank everyone who has taken an active part in the Group this year by turning up on walks, entering challenge events and by coming to the AGM.

**Secretary - Peter Simon**

BBN news updates are sent every week except when there is no news to report. There was some news in all but eight weeks over the last twelve months.
There were 734 recipients as of 12/11/2019. The corresponding number for the same week in 2018 was 697. The number of recipients is expected to continue to climb until January as new members join, and subsequently to fall as non-renewals are deleted from the mailing list

.
12 extra copies of each Strider are received from national LDWA. These are distributed to Committee members at each Committee meeting. They have discretion to place them wherever they see fit.

Received and responded to emails.
Few phone enquiries.
Unwanted e-mails are increasingly rare - spam filters and unsubscribing seem to be working.
I have been in touch with Adam Dawson, Internet Secretary for the NEC, concerning legitimate correspondence from ldwa.org.uk that some Internet Service Providers are automatically sending to junk or spam mail folders (including my own). No solution has yet been found. If members have not been receiving such e-mails but think that they should be, please check your spam filters. Please be patient.

**Social Walks – Mary Knight**

We would like to thank the following walk leaders who have led social walks during the period October 2017 to September 2018. We thank them for their time, expertise and effort and without whom we would not exist.

Therese Jamin Wayne Rowlett
Mick Smith Linda Marsh
Dee Brockway David Findel-Hawkins

Gill Bunker Graham Dolby

Norman Corrin Santa

Terry Brown Geoff Hancock

Phil Hastings Roy Carter

Sara Waldron Geoff Curnock

Eric Cartwright Peter Simon

Colin Stoneman Roger & Margaret Skerman

Jim Robinson Dave Sedgley

Anne Addison Bob Safford

Dave Yorston Christine Bramley

**Membership – Dave Findel-Hawkins**

I regularly (normally at beginning of each month) supply Norman Corrin with details of any new BBN Primary members so he can welcome them to the group. 23 families and 38 individual have been contacted this reporting year.
Since the last AGM we have collected a register of who is on the walk, as required by the LDWA insurers. Initially these were stored in a file on the picture gallery on the BBN pages of LDWA website. They can now be stored on the walk details entry on the BBN pages of the LDWA website and this is now the way we store the registers. Thanks to everyone who assists in taking these registers.
Membership at end of September: 444 Primary members
 377 Associate members

**Welcome New Members - Norman Corrin**After I receive the list from Dave I phone the new members and welcome them to the LDWA and the group. If after 2 phone calls there’s no answer I’ll email them with a welcome note about the group and information about next of kin contacts in case of emergencies.
I’ll find out how much walking they’ve done previously. Sometimes they’ve been out with the group on a Thursday walk and Dave has given them all the spiel anyway.
A lot are runners who’ve joined because they’ve found out what good value our events are in comparison to other running events. Occasionally the member is not interested in challenge events, social walks but long-distance paths for which the website is a gold mine.
I’ve always believed that with new members a welcoming phone call is enough to remind them to get their boots on and walk.

**Website – Gill Bunker**

* Photos and links added after majority of group walks and events; thank you especially to Merrian and Dave F-H for photos and maps of Thursday walks.
* Information, route descriptions and results added as requested by BBN challenge event organisers.
* News kept up to date, including updated information about group walks and advertising \*pop ups\*.
* Terry and I share the input of group walks onto the LDWA website and this is working well.

**Facebook:**

* 179 members
* Norman, Daniel Jamin and myself are Admins and Moderators
* FB used a lot to share photos – I post links to photos on the BBN website. Members upload their own photos. Let’s have more of those!
* Again a useful tool for circulating updated/urgent information. Good to get reactions and conversations going, as with photographs during the recent Isle of Wight trip.

**Twitter:** 150 followers, PeterE tweets regularly.

**Newsletter – Gill Bunker**

* Three Newsletters per year – Spring (Feb), Summer (June), Autumn (October)
* Good and varied supply of articles from members – a great response from contributors.
Thank you all.
* 20 hard copies are posted out to members who have requested one. PeterS includes a link to the Newsletter on the website in his Tuesday news update as soon as it is available.

**Local Groups Representative – Peter Simon**

The annual local groups representatives weekend took place this year at YHA Sherwood Forest, Edwinstowe, Notts on 15-17 November. There were three substantive sessions on the Friday and Saturday evenings and the Sunday morning.

The Friday session centred around the issue of whether Hundred organisers should reimburse the travel expenses of checkpoint personnel. The consensus view appeared to me to be that reimbursement ought to be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the organising committee has a surplus at the end - and some have not in recent years - then the disbursement of the surplus is entirely at their discretion.

The Saturday session concerned the issue of how to finance a rebuild of the LDWA Website that will be needed in the next five years. David Morgan of the NEC has prepared a detailed note on the issue, which is presented below as Appendix A..

The Sunday session covered mainly topics suggested in advance by local groups or their representatives regarding policy on many of the issues that concern them. The agenda for the session is presented below as Appendix B.

The BBN contribution to the agenda was item 10a, on attracting more volunteers to lead social walks. As with most of the others topics, there was no firm answer as to what works and what does not. The main suggestions concerned how to deal with members who are willing to volunteer but are insufficiently confident in their ability to plan and lead a walk. It was suggested that experienced leaders provide one-on-one assistance at all stages of the development of the walk. There were no useful suggestions on how to deal with regular members who are confident in their ability to lead but choose not to.

I expect eventually to receive an information pack on the weekend containing full minutes and more. The relevant bits will then be posted on the website and members will be informed.

**Appendix A**

**Local Group Reps’ Weekend: IT Funding Workshop Summary – 16.11.19**

During the evening of 16.11.19, the second of two workshops relating to the long term funding of IT provisions for the Long Distance Walkers Association was held. Delegates were asked to consider the following topics listed under Revenue Streams and Cost Savings.

Strider Magazine

NEC Costs

Lottery & Other Grants

Challenge Event Levy

Local Group Donations

Bequests

Subscription Increase

Special LDWA Events

Amazon Commission

Adverts

Whilst many observations were made, this document summarises key discussions where it is believed that funds can be raised significantly over a five year period and are therefore worthy of serious consideration and therefore further scoping.

**1. Strider Magazine**In 2018 / 19 the total cost to produce and post Strider was £51,072 with the printing costing £33,487.

It was suggested that the contract with the current publisher should be reviewed to see if costs savings can be made.

It was also suggested that many members would be happy to read Strider electronically and if they therefore opted out of receiving a hard copy, could contribute to cost savings.

Work by NEC together with a LDWA member with experience of renegotiating contracts to determine best approach.

**2. Local Group Donations**Several geographical groups in the LDWA have large reserves. Feedback at the workshop indicated that some groups recognise that the reserves they hold are far greater than they ought to be but are unclear on what they could / should do with the reserves accrued. During the conversation, it was suggested that groups should have a reserve that matches the group’s required annual turnover. Furthermore local groups might be encouraged on a voluntary basis to donate a sum to the NEC to be added to the IT fund.

**3. Adverts**It was recognised that there is limited scope for a substantial income via Strider magazine. However, with certain LDWA pages receiving high numbers of daily hits, namely the Long Distance Paths section, work should progress to identify if advertising on the website would be viable. One caveat was that adverts should only be added if the current website could be updated cheaply or easily to accommodate the adverts.

**4. Challenge Walk Levy**Considerable time was spent on this subject. The NEC believes that this is the key to long term sustainable fund raising. Tony Willey presented to the delegates. Lakeland LDWA has created a process where they identify what fee to charge entrants. This fee is set for LDWA members. Non-members are charged 50% more.

E.G. Member £8 / Non-Member £12

The additional income (£4 in this example) is accumulated and will be transferred to the NEC IT Funding account.

For the Lakeland LDWA ‘That’s Lyth’ event alone, £860 has been accumulated and will be transferred to NEC IT Funding account.

A long debate took place with regards to how this would work for other groups as in some cases entry fees for members and non-members are significantly different in order to encourage people to join the LDWA.

Representatives promised to return to their groups in order to establish if they would support the fund raising process and would report back to the NEC by 31.01.20. It was recognised that some local groups were not represented at the meeting and they would receive visits from NEC members to outline the challenge facing the LDWA and to seek their ‘buy-in’ if support was obtained by 31.01.20.

The Chair outlined that if the consensus was that as an association this was something that should be introduced, that it would unethical for groups who do hold challenge events to not participate in the scheme.

**5. Special LDWA Events**It was recognised that special LDWA challenge events might be attractive to members. However, it was highlighted that the events needed to be truly special.

Suggestions included having a ‘triple’ challenge as a one-off fund raising process with all profits being transferred to the NEC IT Funding account.

**6. Charging Non-LDWA Groups To Advertise**During the discussion it was suggested that several non-LDWA events are advertised on the LDWA website as well as the Strider magazine. The adverts are free and do not take the cost of events into account. It was suggested that some of the non-LDWA events are very expensive compared to LDWA events and the organisations should be charged an admin fee to advertise. This fee would be added to the NEC IT Funding account.

**7. Subscription Increase**It was recognised during the discussion that 13 years of not raising subscription fees had actually caused the LDWA issues. Last year when the subs were increased by £2, several people left the LDWA. Any rise would need to take into account that members will leave. In addition, a £1 increase would only raise roughly £10,000 for one year.

**8. LDWA – Charitable Status**It was highlighted that if the LDWA became a charity, it could raise an additional 25% as tax could be reclaimed. A discussion confirmed the LDWA had considered becoming a charity in the past but had decided to become a limited company by guarantee due to there being less constraints being placed on the association.

Enquiries will be made by the NEC to identify the exact details of what was considered.

**9. Crowd Funding**

It was suggested that the LDWA might wish to explore the prospect of Crowd Funding. To be explored by NEC.

**10. Bequests**

A very, very sensitive subject. NEC outlined that an article about Neville Mitton’s bequest had been placed in Strider. The NEC has gently raised the topic and received positive feedback from some members. This is not an area with a guaranteed income and so could never be relied upon.

**11. NEC Costs**

It costs on average, £2000 to hold a NEC committee meeting. Some savings might be made if meetings were held by Skype. There are benefits to meeting face to face and the meetings would continue, but if one meeting a year could be held by Skype, in five years £10,000 will have been saved. For further consideration by the NEC.

David Morgan

Chair

17.11.19

**Appendix B
Local Group Representatives’ weekend Sunday 17 November 2019
Agenda Formal meeting 09.30-12.45**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

**2. Actions from the last meeting**

**3. Governance matters**

a. GDPR and Photographs

b. GDPR and forwarding e-mai!s from outside LDWA

c. Dogs on walks policy wording

**4. Finance and insurance**

a. Long Term Strategic Funding

b. Insurance and Walk Registers

c. Filing the Walk Registers

d. Under 18s on walks

**5. IT**

a. LDWA Bulk Emails and Spam

b. Toolkit progress

**6. LDWA 100s**

a. Planning for forthcoming 100s

b. Support for Local Groups supporting 100s

**7. Marketing and Publicity**

**8. Events**

a. Standard set of terms and conditions for Challenge Events

b. Planning for No-Shows at events

c. Members only windows for entering Challenge Events

d. Balancing runners and walkers at Challenge Events

e. First Aid cover on Challenge Events

f. Marshals′ walks - Social or individual?

**9. Membership**

a. Why do members not re-join

**10. Local Group Matters**

a. Getting volunteers

b. Communicating with members and others

c. Social or Group Walks - Pace, distance

d. Identifying LDWA members

e. Improving communication between LGs and NEC

f. Communications between LGs

11. **National initiatives (Creating central resources or agreements that LGs can have benefit from)**

a. Updating LG banners with new Ingo - Single supplier, consistency, financial support?

b. Emergency telephone coverage in rural areas. Work with Ramblers, Mountain Rescue etc.

c. Sets of PACER equipment that can be hired or loaned out to LGs

d. Multiuser licence to a recognised supplier for creating maps and route marking for challenge events

**12. Strider**

a. Dates for walks submissions

b. Social walks in Strider - content

c. Using colour in walk entries to highlight exceptions

**13. Project 50**

**14. AOCB**

a. Beach of Dreams

**l5. Date and Venue for LGW 2020**

a. Friday 13th - Sunday 15th November 2020

b. Venue tbc

**16. Evaluation Sheets**

**17. Claim Forms**

**18. Thanks and close**