

**LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION DORSET GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019 - MINUTES**



The Kingcombe Centre, Toller Porcorum, 2pm Sunday 1 December 2019

Members present:

Julie Bardswell, Phil Bardswell, Kathy Bingham, Robin Britton, Rosemary Britton, Anne Brown, Ian Brown, Richard Brown, Sandra Brown, Martin Callow, Mike Childs, Rachel Christopher, Pat Clifton, Peter Cowlyn, Steve Davies, Patricia Dashwood, Deirdre Flegg, Heather N Giles, Angela Gray, Dave Green, Hilary Guess-England, Richard Lang, Tracey Lang, Alan Mattison, Debbie Murphy, Yvonne Norman, Bill Peach, Sue Phillips, Chris Pitt, John Ponsford, Sue Ponsford, Robert Powell, Pete Stockley, Brian Taylor, Ted Tupling, Colin Utting, Jan Williams

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chris Pitt welcomed everyone to the 2019 AGM of Dorset LDWA Group and thanked them for attending. He also thanked Dave Green for leading the walk in the morning and for suggesting the venue.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Steve Mayne, Wendy Mayne, Keith Nicholson, John Widdowson, Sue Widdowson.

3. AGM 2018 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the minutes for the AGM 2018
Proposed: Peter Cowlyn Seconded: Deirdre Flegg

The minutes were approved unanimously

4. AGM 2018 - MATTERS ARISING

Chris Pitt thanked John Widdowson for raising, at the national AGM 2019, the Dorset Group's objection to the manner in which the NEC were proposing to select the new national logo.

Deirdre Flegg enquired about the proposed purchase of a new sail banner and Robert Powell replied that he would be covering that in the Treasurer's Report.

5. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Julie Bardswell and Bill Peach are standing down from the Committee.

The agenda listed the following nominations, for officers and ordinary members of the Committee, that had been received by the deadline of 3 Nov 2019:

Officers:

- Chair - Chris Pitt (Proposed: Martin Callow; Seconded: Pat Clifton)
- Group Secretary - Pat Clifton (Proposed: Robert Powell; Seconded: Bill Peach)
- Treasurer - Robert Powell (Proposed: Anne Brown; Seconded: Chris Pitt)
- Walks Secretary - Anne Brown (Proposed: Tracey Lang; Seconded: Richard Lang)

Other Committee Members:

- Phil Bardswell (Proposed: Chris Pitt; Seconded: Bill Peach)
- Martin Callow (Proposed: Patricia Dashwood; Seconded: Keith Nicholson)
- Ian Brown (Proposed: Pat Clifton; Seconded: Martin Callow)

No other nominations were received by the deadline. Chris Pitt proposed that, to save time, the AGM could vote en bloc for the above nominations. There was no objection to this, and the subsequent vote to approve the appointments of the nominated Committee Officers and members of the Committee was unanimous.

Chris Pitt said that Richard Lang had agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee in January 2020. He also highlighted that the Committee are looking for a member to lead on catering for events and another to be the quartermaster for the group, to keep track of group equipment.

Chris Pitt agreed to take the role of Events Secretary in addition to that of Chair.

6. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

- **Group Secretary (Pat Clifton)**

Pat Clifton gave the following information on group membership:

The Group currently has 247 primary members, 50 of whom joined in 2019. The Group also has 448 associate members (who have primary membership with other groups) with 112 joining in 2019. This makes a total of: 695.

She said that, from these figures it appears that membership of the Group is increasing rapidly, but the membership numbers have in fact changed little from 2018, with only 4 more primary members and 7 more associates (total increase 11) this year. She expressed some surprise at the large turnover of members.

There are currently 99 members on the Dorset Group email list, which is used to communicate with those who have shown an interest in coming on walks. Anyone can request to be on this list, which is used for sending additional information regarding Sunday walks and details of Re:Tired walks, which are generally on Wednesdays and arranged at short notice.

With regard to committee meetings Pat Clifton stated:

There were 5 meetings in 2019, starting on 11 Jan, which was the last one held in Wareham. That meeting was dedicated to planning the Giant.

The next meeting was 21 Feb, when the Committee moved to Winterborne Kingston Village Hall and this was followed by 3 more throughout the year.

One more date has been booked for 9 Jan 2020, at Winterborne Kingston village hall.

The Committee are currently looking for a more convenient and warmer venue for their meetings.

All primary members can attend committee meetings, but it would be helpful to know in advance if members want to come, so please let the Committee know.

There are still a couple of vacancies for committee members, as the Group can have up to 10 on the Committee, so if any members might be interested in coming forward the Committee would be very pleased to hear from them.

Pat Clifton went on to mention the Committee's hope to develop a team of people to lead on catering for challenge events. The idea being that this task won't fall on one person repeatedly, as it did for Deirdre Flegg in the past, but be more of a shared enterprise, passing on the work and responsibility from one to another and using our experience to help each other out.

Pat Clifton then thanked the Committee for their help and patience during her first year as group secretary, with a particular thanks to Martin Callow, for all his help and guidance throughout the year.

- **Events Secretary (delivered by Chris Pitt on behalf of Julie Bardswell)**

Julie Bardswell reported that the Group had run the Dorset Giant over the weekend of the 13/14 Apr 2019, which was the first time this had been done since 2013, due to organising the Dorset 100 in 2016. She said the Group had been unable to book the hall at Loders as a checkpoint, as in previous years, due to a clash with a booking for a wedding. The village hall at Shipton Gorge had been used instead, with an additional drinks point between there and Toller Porcorum. There had been 243 paid entries for the event, with 196 starting on the day and 178 finishing the walk. This was a dropout rate of approximately 9%. Weather conditions were good.

Julie Bardswell then mentioned the Dorset Duddle in August, where the route had remained unchanged. There were originally 299 entrants, with 230 starting on the day and 204 completing the event, a few of whom were outside the time limit. The dropout rate was about 11% and times for completion were roughly the same as usual.

- **Walks Secretary (Anne Brown)**

Anne Brown thanked the group members for leading a super variety and number of walks over the year.

Anne Brown used a PowerPoint presentation to give the following information:

Three long distance paths, The Stour Valley Way, The Leland Trail and The Liberty Trail had been used to create a number of linear walks around Dorset. As some of these had not been well supported she asked for feedback on why this was so. She asked for a show of hands on ideas such as, the location of some walks being a long way to travel and the need to book in advance for a place on the minibus.

There were 32 Sunday walks over the year, including 9 linear walks, with a total length of 574 miles. The slide showed there was a good spread of locations across, and sometimes a few miles outside, the county. Re:Tired walks totalled 27 including 1 linear and amounted to 382 miles. These were generally on Wednesdays and were again widely spread. This meant there was a total of 59 social walks, covering 956 miles over the year.

Walks had been led by 28 members of the group, 3 of whom were new to leading. Eleven members had led more than one walk, with 6 of them leading more than 3 walks each.

Anne presented Dave Green with a mug for being 'Walk Leader of the Year' with a total of 12 walks.

Richard Brown suggested sending these statistics to the NEC.

- **Treasurer (Robert Powell)**

Robert Powell said his task was to report on the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2019 and that hopefully everyone who wants it, has access to a copy of these. In addition, he said his report covers the outturn for the three challenge events that the Group held in the financial year and an update on the financial implications of the motions that the AGM approved in 2017.

Robert Powell then thanked Colin Utting for his inspection of this year's annual accounts and for confirming that they were a true and accurate record of the Group's financial dealings. He mentioned that Colin Utting had kindly offered to do the same for the current year (see item 9 on the agenda).

Robert Powell then went on to report the following:

The accounts show that group funding decreased by £3,067 this year to £11,168. The Group should not be alarmed by such a decrease in our funds in just one year because this was largely due to the postponement of the Doddle West, for which much of the expenditure fell into this financial year, whereas much of the income arose in the previous financial year. Had the Doddle West not been postponed due to snow, the financial position of the Group a year ago would have shown an annual deficit of £809 instead of a surplus of £599, making the deficit for this year £1,660, instead of £3,067.

Two years ago, at the 2017 AGM, the Group effectively adopted a strategy, to reduce the funding held by the Group, in a controlled manner over a number of years.

The Doddle West, which was held right at the start of the financial year (on 21 Oct 2018) achieved a surplus of £693.

The Dorset Giant held every three years by the Group as part of the South West Triple Challenge, was run over the weekend of 13/14 April and achieved a surplus of £291.

The Dorset Duddle 2019, the Group's third challenge event of the financial year, held as always in August, made a large surplus of £1,545.

The Group received £100 from Ramblers Holidays as a result of members mentioning the Group when booking their holidays. (Thank you to those who did that).

In 2017 the AGM passed various motions that each had a direct financial implication:

a) **The purchase of a sail banner** at an approximate cost of £160. It is intended to purchase this once the outcome of a new group logo is known.

b) **For an event/party in 2018 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first Dorset Group walk**, at an approximate cost of £1,500. Net expenditure on the party held on 6 Oct 2018, amounted to £1,052.23.

c) **Grant of a per capita subsidy towards breakfast for participants in a summer or winter solstice walk**, subject to a maximum of £150 per solstice event. £58.45 was spent on the 2018 winter solstice, and £70.10 on the 2019 summer solstice.

d) **Grant to subsidise a summer barbecue**, subject to a maximum of £150 per annum. The event took place on 14 July, at a cost of £141.69.

e) **Grant of a provision of £3,000 to reimburse all reasonable out of pocket costs (excluding time) incurred in supporting group challenge/marshals' events.** This to include travel to determine if premises are appropriate for a group challenge walk or for writing/checking the route. The Committee shall monitor this expenditure and review the scheme as these funds become exhausted or at any other time at its discretion. Expenditure of £742.60 was incurred in the year ended 30 Sep 2019. The cumulative total spent in respect of the past two financial years is £1,004.24.

f) **Grant of a provision of £1,000 to reimburse members reasonable expenses when supporting checkpoints on events not organised by the Dorset Group.** Events qualifying for reimbursement shall be pre-approved by the Committee and the contribution from Group funds shall have regard to any donation received from another group. Again the Committee shall monitor and review this expenditure/scheme, as in e) above.

No expenditure was incurred in the year ended 30 September 2019. However, income of £250 was received from the Kent Group, in respect of the Group check point in Folkestone on the Cinque Ports 100 in May 2018.

The cumulative net total spent in respect of the past two financial years is £446.33.

7. ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS

Motion: To adopt the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2019.

Proposed: Dave Green Seconded: Phil Bardswell.

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. MOTIONS

There was one motion on the agenda for the AGM as follows:

Motion 1: In two parts (a) and (b) relating to the Group logo

Rationale: The current logo incorporates the obsolete striding figure from the previous national LDWA logo. The Committee therefore has decided to endorse the following motions.

- (a) That approval be given to replace the current Group logo with a new design which may, but need not, include features of the new national logo but should include some components that are distinctively Dorset.
- (b) That if (a) is approved, designs for a new Group logo be invited from primary members of the Group. The Committee may also invite proposals or design work from outside the Group. A short list will be drawn up by the Committee. The winning design will be selected by a ballot of primary members of the Group and will be adopted as the Group logo.

Proposed: Phil Bardswell Seconded: Robert Powell.

Phil Bardswell spoke to explain part (a) of the motion with PowerPoint slides to illustrate his points. He said that that our current logo, incorporating the striding figure from the old national logo, is now out of date. He demonstrated what the Group's logo would look like using the figure from the new national logo, in place of the old striding figure. He said there are a vast range of possibilities for the design of the new Dorset logo, including changing the overall shape of it.

There was some discussion regarding the new national logo and whether it had achieved its purpose of having a more modern image, as intended.

Motion 1(a) was carried unanimously.

Chris Pitt spoke about the implementation of part (b) saying that the Committee will discuss this at the next meeting (9 Jan 2020) and then send out details to the primary members, along with a time frame for the submission of

designs. He said that once the Committee had decided on a shortlist, there would be a ballot of primary members to express their preferences and in the event of a tie, he would have the casting vote.

There was some discussion which included the following points:

Phil Bardswell said the Group should be as inclusive as possible of the broad pool of talent available. Julie Bardswell asked if the image of the Cerne Giant should be excluded from the designs and Chris Pitt said not completely, at this stage. Phil Bardswell asked for a show of hands, of those who considered the Cerne Giant inappropriate, and 9 members present indicated they did. Mike Childs said that some things do not look good on a small image and Colin Utting agreed that we need to consider where the logo might be used, with particular regard to how much detail could be included. Phil Bardswell suggested, with this in mind, that clear, simple designs would be best. Hilary England commented that there are many ideas we could use to suggest Dorset and Peter Stockley reminded members to be mindful of the logo designs of other Dorset walking groups. Debbie Murphy asked who had designed the logo for the Dorset 100 and the reply came that it was Richard Brown.

Motion 1(b) was carried unanimously.

9. APPOINTMENT OF THE EXAMINER OF THE ACCOUNTS

Robert Powell thanked Colin Utting for agreeing to take on this role for another the year. Colin Utting said that although he was happy to do so, this will be his third year examining the accounts and in the interests of impartiality he would encourage someone else to volunteer to do it next year.

Proposed: Martin Callow Seconded: Bill Peach.

The motion was carried unanimously.

10. FORTHCOMING CHALLENGE EVENTS

a) Cerne Giant - 22 March 2020 (incl. Marshals' Event, 1 March 2020)

Martin Callow is leading on the organisation of the main event and he said that he has 28 volunteers to help so far. He said he will be discussing roles with them soon, but would like 6 or 7 more marshals if possible. Robin Britton and Sue Phillips volunteered.

Mike Childs asked about parking for the event and Martin Callow replied that the problem had been solved, with the use of the car park at the doctors' surgery. He said that he was still working on the details of how to organise the entrants, with regard to parking and walking to the start at the village hall.

As the organiser of the marshals' event Ian Brown said the following members had volunteered to help him: Deirdre Flegg, Mike Childs, Rachel Christopher, Sue Widdowson, Rosemary Britton and Hilary England.

b) Dorset Duddle - 23 August 2020 (incl. Marshals' Event, 26 July 2020)

Chris Pitt stated that entries will go live for the Duddle at the end of February 2020. Anne Brown is leading on the marshals' event.

c) Group challenge events 2021

As the third event in the Group's 3 year cycle it was confirmed, after some discussion, that the Duddle West will be held again in 2021, with the date yet to be decided.

11. SOCIAL WALKS PROGRAMME

Anne Brown appealed for everyone to consider leading a walk and to ask for support if they were unsure about doing so. She said that if every regular walker planned a walk there would be approximately 35 leaders and members could sign up right away at the AGM, or on the Walks Doodle online.

Angela Gray advised members not to avoid dates when there was a challenge walk elsewhere, because there would still be plenty of walkers wanting to walk locally. Anne Brown agreed with this and said the only dates to avoid completely were those when our group is running a challenge event. In addition she pointed out that once walks are advertised in Strider they cannot be cancelled and that on 1 or 2 occasions last year a leader had to be found at short notice due to illness etc.

12. LOCAL GROUPS' MEETING 2019 - VERBAL REPORT

Anne Brown and Chris Pitt had attended the weekend, on behalf of the Group, in Sherwood Forest on 15 - 17 Nov 2019.

Anne Brown gave a PowerPoint presentation about the purpose of the weekend and what had been discussed this year. It contained the following:

- Groups are invited to send representatives every year and most do so. It is helpful to meet with others, share ideas, discuss problems and consider group organisation. Representatives also discuss items affecting the LDWA nationally and feedback to the NEC.
- Since last year the LDWA has agreed on the new logo. The Data Protection measures and Safeguarding Policy are also now in place. With regard to taking photographs on walks, particularly if children are involved, members should be mindful that some people might have objections with regard to how these could be used.
- Ongoing matters include the walks register (to be taken and filed for every walk, with visitor slips to be completed and retained) and LDWA membership cards now containing ICE information. Also members should be

aware of the 'Toolkit' section on the national website because it contains much useful information.

- Subjects for next year include the Dogs on Walks Policy, for which our group has been tasked with writing a new draft, to be considered by the NEC. In addition ideas were invited for reducing the turnover of membership, attracting more entrants to the Sir Fynwy 100, encouraging more walk leaders to come forward and meeting the deadline for walk details to go into Strider (necessary as not all members have internet access). The pace on social walks had also been raised, with some disagreement between the representatives on this. Anne Brown expressed her opinion that walk leaders should make the difficulty of the walk clear in the walk description in Strider and on the website.
- Other types of social events were discussed such as group holidays, meals out, barbeques and Christmas celebrations. The Dorset Group committee is open to suggestions from the members.
- The topic of funding for marshals helping on events, for groups other than their own, was discussed. This included donations made towards marshals' expenses and additional payments, made by some groups. It was agreed that full funding for marshals was not viable and this might detract from the community atmosphere. Many groups said they are in need of more volunteers.
- Future projects include:
 - **Seabirds to South** - a publicity and fundraising walk by Phoebe Smith during Nov/Dec 2019.
 - **Beach of Dreams** - a collaborative walking and arts project in 2021, organized by the London group.
 - **Project 50** - to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the LDWA in 2022. Ideas for this were discussed including '50' themed events, a relay walk from Land's End to John o' Groats and a LDWA feature on broadcast media.

Chris Pitt then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the LDWA's information technology (IT) provision. He said questions had been raised with the NEC on the need to replace the website. It was made clear that the website is very dated, has a lack of security and is costing £15,000 to £30,000 a year to maintain. The NEC would like to freeze the current site, with intention of replacing it in 5 years' time. For this reason they are looking to raise funds and the representatives at the Local Groups' Meeting were asked to consider a number of topics listed under the heading of Revenue Streams and Cost Savings.

Chris Pitt's presentation covered these topics as follows:

- **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 cost 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, this could contribute to cost savings.

Action Point: Work by the NEC, together with a LDWA member with experience of renegotiating contracts, to determine the best approach.

- **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 however, to meeting face to face and therefore some meetings would continue. If one meeting a year could be held by Skype, in five years £10,000 will have been saved.

Action Point: For further consideration by the NEC.

- **Lottery & Other Grants**

An application for a National Lottery grant had been submitted but failed to get approval. Crowd funding was also suggested.

Action Point: A further application for a National Lottery grant should be considered but would require someone with expertise in the area of writing grant applications.

- **Challenge Event 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 the process created by the Lakeland LDWA group for raising funds in this way. Firstly they identify what fee to charge entrants who are LDWA members and then increase this by 50 % for non-members. eg. Member £8 / Non-Member £12. The additional income is accumulated and will be transferred to the IT Fund.

(Chris Pitt commented that in Dorset the fees charged to non-members entering our events are used to subsidise the members on the event).

Action Point: Representatives are to return to their groups in order to establish if they would support this fund raising process and report back to the NEC by 31 Jan 2020.

- **Local Group Donations**

Several geographical groups in the LDWA have large financial 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 them. 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 for the IT fund.

- **Bequests**

This was acknowledged to be a very sensitive subject. The NEC outlined that an article about Neville Mitton's bequest had been placed in Strider and that on gently raising the topic they had received positive feedback from some members. This was not considered an area of guaranteed income and so could never be relied upon.

- **Subscription Increase**

It was recognised, during the discussion, that 13 years without raising the subscription fees had caused the LDWA issues. Last year when fees were increased by £2 per annum, several people left the LDWA and this would need to be taken into account in the future. In addition, a £1 increase would only raise roughly £10,000 per year.

- **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 raiser, with all profits being transferred to the IT Fund.

- **Advertising**

There was considered to be limited scope for substantial advertising income via Strider magazine. However, with certain LDWA web pages receiving high numbers of daily hits, namely the Long Distance Paths section, it was decided that work should progress to identify if fund raising, by having advertising on the website, would be viable. During the discussion it was suggested that several non-LDWA events are advertised on the LDWA website and also in Strider. These advertisements are currently free and do not take the cost of the events, which can be high, into account. It was suggested that non-LDWA organisations promoting their events in this way should be charged a fee.

There was much discussion as a result of this presentation. Several members queried how much money the NEC were trying to raise and why no firm estimate(s) of the cost of replacing the website had been given. It was suggested that the project is being run in an abnormal way, with the NEC unclear about what the website should be capable of doing and therefore unable to establish the cost of it. Chris Pitt said that we don't know what will be needed from the website in 5 years' time and that the LDWA need to start raising the money now, so it will be available when the decision to go ahead is made. He also pointed out that all the current members of the NEC will have been replaced by then. More concern was expressed as to whether the NEC had the expertise to run this project and were capable of drawing up a proper business plan.

Chris Pitt said that a number of other groups are contributing to the IT fund and as yet, we have not done so. He proposed that we should increase the amount charged to non-members entering our events, so they pay £10 more than the members, with the intention of allocating £5 of the surcharge to the IT fund, the remainder to be included in the event budget. The committee are to discuss this. Dave Green said that the group should have a formal motion to make this change at the next AGM. Chris Pitt pointed out that it was too late to change the charges for the events in 2020 anyway, as these were already published and that the new rates would apply to events in 2021.

A vote was taken, by a show of hands, to indicate those in favour of this policy as a way forward, with the result that there were 28 members for the motion, 5 against and 4 abstentions.

Julie Bardswell suggested that the Dorset Group could make a one-off donation to the IT fund of £5,000, from our current financial surplus.

Finally there was a brief discussion of how the NEC are communicating with the membership. Anne Brown said this had been raised at the Local Groups' Meeting where most groups said they got information via Dave Morgan's newsletter. She said that the Dorset LDWA Committee will keep raising this issue with the NEC.

13. GROUP SUPPORT FOR EVENTS BEING RUN BY OTHER GROUPS IN 2020

The Wiltshire 50 - Martin Callow said that this is a new event organised by the Wiltshire group, planned for the weekend of 31 Oct/1 Nov 2020. He said that the Dorset Committee had agreed to run a checkpoint at Hindon, 33 miles into the route and we will be asking for volunteers to help. Anyone so doing will be eligible to enter the marshals' event.

The Wellington Boot - Bill Peach said we would be running checkpoint 1 and he already had enough volunteers to help with this.

The South Wales 100 - Chris Pitt said our group will be running a checkpoint at Pandy for which he has 8 volunteers so far and he would like to hear from anyone else interested.

14. RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Chris Pitt said that Julie Bardswell and Bill Peach were standing down from the Committee and he thanked them for their many years' service to the Group.

He also thanked Phil Bardswell and Julie Bardswell for organising and running the group barbeque in 2019.

Colin Utting, he thanked for his examination of the Group's annual accounts.

Chris Pitt then went on to congratulate Deirdre Flegg on the special award that she had received for many years' service to the LDWA and Sandra Brown for achieving the world leading landmark of completing 200 events of 100 miles.

15. DATES OF 2020 COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND AGM

Chris Pitt said that the dates, of the committee meetings and AGM in 2020, would be circulated as soon as possible. He thanked Dave Green once again for suggesting the location for the AGM this year. He confirmed that the next committee meeting has been booked for 9 Jan 2020.

16. AOB

Richard Brown thanked the Committee for all their hard work over the year.

Chris Pitt said that, after their next meeting, the Committee would circulate a diary of events for the coming year.