

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION DORSET GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017 - MINUTES



Town Hall, Wareham 3pm Sunday 26 November 2017

Members present:

Julie Bardswell, Phil Bardswell, Kathy Bingham, Teresa Brooker, Anne Brown, Ian Brown, Philip Brown, Richard Brown, Sandra Brown, Martin Callow, Mike Childs, Rachel Christopher, Pat Clifton, Peter Cowlyn, Patricia Dashwood, Jackie Farquharson, Deirdre Flegg, Angela Gray, David Green, Richard Lang, Tracey Lang, Alan Mattison, Steve Mayne, Wendy Mayne, Debbie Murphy, Keith Nicholson, Yvonne Norman, Bill Peach, Sue Phillips, Chris Pitt, Robert Powell, Pete Stockley, Brian Taylor, Ted Tupling, Colin Utting, John Widdowson, Sue Widdowson, Jan Williams

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chris Pitt welcomed everyone to the 2017 AGM of Dorset LDWA Group.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jim Brewster, Pete Covey, Robert Cox, Hilary England, Charlie Hillier, Michael Scanlon, Pete Scriven, Martin Sheppard, Brian Vickery.

3. AGM 2016 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Item 6: "Deirdre Flegg asked if the Group Secretary could publish Committee minutes as soon as possible after the relevant meeting" should read "Deirdre Flegg asked if the Committee minutes could be published in accordance with the constitution."

Item 7 Motion (a): "An amendment was proposed to delete...." should read "Richard Brown proposed and Phil Bardswell seconded an amendment to delete..."

Item 12: "In addition to those who had already volunteered for the North Yorks Moors 100 in 2017, Deirdre Flegg and Ted Tupling said they would be helping on the main event,...." should read "In addition to those who had already volunteered for the North Yorks Moors 100 in 2017, Ted Tupling said he would be helping on the main event, and Deirdre Flegg and Mike Childs said they would be helping on the marshals' event..."

Motion: To approve the minutes with the above corrections.

Proposed: Phil Bardswell; Seconded: Richard Brown

The motion was carried unanimously.

4. AGM 2016 - MATTERS ARISING

Item 7 Motion (a): There had been little enthusiasm from the National Trust and landowners regarding the signage proposals, so the surplus Dorset 100 funds previously allocated to signage had been donated to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Item 14, bullet one: Anne Brown instead of Chris Pitt was now to sort out the Group's first aid kits.

5. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Julie Bardswell and Bill Peach were standing down from their posts as Treasurer and Walks Secretary respectively. Chris Pitt thanked them for their service to the Group and welcomed their intention to remain as ordinary Committee members. The agenda listed the following nominations for officers and ordinary members of the Committee that had been received by the deadline:

Officers

- Chair - Chris Pitt (Proposed: Phil Bardswell; Seconded: Robert Powell)
- Treasurer - Robert Powell (Proposed: Julie Bardswell; Seconded: Phil Bardswell)
- Group Secretary - Martin Callow (Proposed: Anne Brown; Seconded: Patricia Dashwood)
- Walks Secretary - Anne Brown (Proposed: Martin Callow; Seconded: Chris Pitt)
- Events Secretary - Chris Pitt (Proposed: Teresa Brooker; Seconded: Bill Peach)

Other Committee Members

- Julie Bardswell (Proposed: Robert Powell; Seconded: Teresa Brooker)
- Phil Bardswell (Proposed: Robert Powell; Seconded: Teresa Brooker)
- Teresa Brooker (Proposed: Julie Bardswell; Seconded: Bill Peach)
- Bill Peach (Proposed: Martin Callow; Seconded: Phil Bardswell)

No other nominations were received. 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 for the nominated Committee officers and members of the Committee was unanimous.

Deirdre Flegg made a presentation to Bill Peach of a commemorative album to thank him for his long service as Walks Secretary.

Phil Bardswell said that new Committee members were needed. Chris Pitt echoed this and said the Committee needed more members.

6. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

GROUP SECRETARY (Martin Callow)

Martin Callow had already sent out his report by email to all members. He drew attention to some items mentioned in the report. The following comments were made:-

- Peter Cowlyn said that he would be helping on the Cinque Ports 100 but not at the Dorset Group checkpoint.
- Richard Brown mentioned that data protection rules would change in 2018. Chris Pitt said there had been discussion at the local groups meeting and that guidance would be circulated by the national Executive Committee.

EVENTS SECRETARY (Chris Pitt)

Chris Pitt said that Cerne Giant and Dorset Duddle events had been very successful. He thanked Anne Brown for organising the two marshals' events. He said that helpers were still needed for the Duddle West, both marshals' and main events. The Duddle West had 79 entries [as at 26/11].

WALKS SECRETARY (Bill Peach)

Bill Peach said that it had been a successful year with a good number of walks. He thanked Dave Green for organising the Hardy Way series of walks. He had circulated a hard copy asking for leaders and dates for walks for the April-August 2017 period. He asked that walks in future be submitted to Anne Brown. Chris Pitt encouraged new leaders to come forward who could be helped to lead a walk if necessary.

TREASURER (Julie Bardswell)

Julie Bardswell thanked Jim Brewster for auditing the Group accounts. She also thanked John Widdowson for auditing the Dorset 100 accounts. She said that the 100 bank account had been closed. She outlined the main points in the Group accounts for the period 1 October 2016 - 30 September 2017, which are attached to these minutes, and a brief discussion took place.

7. ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS

Motion: *To adopt the accounts.* Proposed: Deirdre Flegg; Seconded: Jackie Farquharson

The motion was carried unanimously.

8. MOTIONS

Motions (a)-(h) related to the allocation of surplus funds, and were proposed by Robert Powell and seconded by Julie Bardswell.

- a) That approval be granted to purchase a sail banner at an approximate cost of £160.*
- b) That approval be granted for an event or party in 2018 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first Group walk at an approximate cost of £1,500.*
- c) That approval be granted to provide all entrants and marshals who participate in both Group challenge walks in 2018 with a free Buff in recognition of the Group's 25th anniversary at an approximate cost of £590.*

- d) *That approval be granted for a per capita subsidy towards breakfast for participants in a summer or winter solstice walk, subject to a maximum of £150 per solstice event.*
- e) *That approval be granted to subsidise a summer barbecue, subject to a maximum of £150 per annum.*
- f) *That approval be granted for the provision of £3,000 to reimburse all reasonable out of pocket costs (excluding time) incurred in supporting Group challenge or challenge marshal events. Allowable costs shall include travel to determine if premises are appropriate for a Group challenge walk or for the purpose of writing and checking the route for a challenge walk. Expenditure shall be monitored by the committee and the committee shall review the scheme as these funds become exhausted or at any other time at its discretion.*
- g) *That approval be granted for the 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. The contribution from Group funds shall have regard to any donation received from another group. Expenditure shall be monitored by the committee and the committee shall review the scheme as these funds become exhausted or at any other time at its discretion.*
- h) *That the committee shall report to the AGM in 2018, 2019 and 2020 on the success and financial implications of the preceding motions and shall recommend a future course of action to the 2020 AGM.*
- i) *That the Dorset LDWA notes the opportunities a Dorset National Park would offer to conserve and enhance our environment, including Dorset's rights of way and long-distance trails, and to encourage greater understanding and enjoyment of our special landscapes and heritage. We encourage Natural England to undertake their next assessment of the proposal as soon as resources permit in 2018. (Proposed: Sandra Brown; Seconded: Anne Brown)*

Motions (a)-(h) had emerged from the proposals of Surplus Funds Sub-Committee.

Robert Powell said that last year's AGM had agreed to look at the level of Group funds held and see how this could be reduced, having regard to retaining a level of funding should the Group incur significant costs following the cancellation of one of its challenge events. He outlined the work of the Sub-Committee and that 43 suggestions for expenditure were received from 12 different members. Eight of the suggestions were suggesting policies that already exist, an example being continuing to offer transport for one-way social walks. In this instance, he urged members to contact the Group Secretary if financial support for transport for social walks is needed.

He said that some of the suggestions potentially involved a considerable amount of work, sometimes ongoing on an annual basis, without the originator necessarily offering either their services or suggesting who might take the task on. As a result, this contributed to such suggestions being rejected. He mentioned suggestions that were made about having group equipment centrally stored, which would improve inventory control. However most members storing equipment are happy to continue to store items. He said that the cost

of such a facility is not necessarily cheap and the main Committee rejected the idea in favour of the status quo with improved inventory control.

He said that there had been a view that, as all the funds that the Group hold have come from those entering Dorset Group challenge events, that entrance fees should either be reduced or events offered free. However, he said that the Cerne Giant in March 2017 had a 30% no show rate, amounting to 50 entrants. The subsequent feeling had been that reducing the entrance fees to events or offering them for free would likely result in an even greater number of no shows as well as raise questions from other LDWA groups.

Robert Powell went on to say that the Sub-Committee had felt that the Group funds should ideally benefit its active members. This was reflected in the recommendations made by the Sub-Committee to the main Committee, the outcome of which was the motions proposed. He outlined the research that had been done on other Groups' finances and what they do with any surpluses. He said that Dorset Group's surplus was higher than any of those that responded.

He said that the Group would retain £6,000 as a contingency should there be a failure of a challenge event that results in significant liabilities, for example in the area of coach and hall hire. He said that the Committee would review this sum periodically. He said that the motions amounted to expenditure of £3,600 over the next three years, which when added to the £6,000 retention still left £4,150 based on the end of year balance of £13,750. Therefore, he said that there is scope for other expenditure and any member can make a proposal for expenditure that the Committee can consider at a future meeting.

Comments were then invited from the floor. In relation to motion (g), Richard Brown said he would have liked to see more flexibility in the provision of £1,000 to reimburse members reasonable expenses when supporting checkpoints on events not organised by the Dorset Group. Robert Powell pointed out that the last sentence of the motion allowed for the Committee to review the level of funding.

Deirdre Flegg said that she was disappointed that the motions were very inward looking and that she would have liked to see more suggestions for funding stiles and path signage or for young people to walk. Julie Bardswell said that the Group had tried to fund signage after the 100, but without success. Dave Green said that the maintenance of stiles and other path furniture was the responsibility of the landowner.

Tracey Lang said there was an opportunity to offer free entry to young people and Sue Phillips asked whether there were other ways in which funds could be dispersed to help the community. Richard Brown said that there needed to be a token entry fee for young people to encourage them to enter events. Sandra Brown said that the Committee should proactively bear in mind ways of engaging with the community. Chris Pitt reiterated that proposals should be submitted to the Committee for community engagement. Phil Bardswell said that members did need to include their suggestions on who would manage any new project.

Colin Utting said that motion (f) should include the word "members". An amendment was therefore proposed so that motion (f) read as follows:-

(f) That approval be granted for the provision of £3,000 to reimburse members all reasonable out of pocket costs.....

Motion: *To adopt the amendment.* Proposed: Colin Utting; Seconded: Ian Brown

The amendment was carried unanimously.

The meeting then voted on motions (a)-(g) as a single block. The motions were carried unanimously.

Discussion then took place on motion (i). Chris Pitt said that there was a procedural motion put forward that motion (i) should not be put. It was proposed by Dave Green and seconded by Phil Bardswell. Dave Green said he was in favour of Sandra Brown outlining to the meeting the proposals for a Dorset national park, but not that the meeting should vote on a motion. He said that the LDWA was not a campaigning organisation and that there were many aspects of the proposals that required a lot of study in order to come to a view. He said that if the motion was carried it would be perceived that the Group supported the national park.

Sandra Brown replied that she agreed that the LDWA was not a campaigning organisation and would not oppose the procedural motion but that she would like the opportunity to address the meeting under item 15 - Any other business. This was agreed. Motion (i) was withdrawn and therefore the procedural motion was not put.

9. APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER OF THE ACCOUNTS

Jim Brewster had said he would stand down and Chris Pitt asked for volunteers for this role. Colin Utting kindly volunteered.

Motion: *To approve the appointment of Colin Utting as independent examiner of the accounts for the period 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2018.* Proposed: Sue Widdowson; Seconded: Julie Bardswell

The motion was carried unanimously.

10. FORTHCOMING GROUP CHALLENGE WALKS

a) Doddle West - 18 March 2018 (incl Marshals' Event, 25 February 2018)

Bill Peach said he would circulate a copy of the organisation chart for the event showing the tasks allocated to volunteers [on the main event]. Martin Callow requested that volunteers notify him as soon as possible if they wanted to enter or help on the marshals' event.

b) Dorset Doddle - 2018 (incl Marshals' Event)

Bill Peach requested that members notify him if they wanted to enter or help on the marshals' event.

c) Dorset Giant - 13-14 April 2019 (incl Marshals' Event, 16-17 March 2019)

Chris Pitt outlined the proposed changes to the route. Martin Callow asked for volunteers from outside the Committee to join the working group for the event. Martin Callow said he had notified Cornwall & Devon Group and Bristol & West Group that the Dorset Giant was back in place as part of the South West Triple Challenge. Deirdre Flegg asked about the future of the South West Triple Challenge. Chris Pitt replied that it was assured.

11. SOCIAL WALKS PROGRAMME

Anne Brown said that there should be a varied programme covering different parts of the county and established leaders could mentor new leaders. She would circulate an email about social walks including a new email address for walk details.

12. LOCAL GROUPS MEETING 2017 - VERBAL REPORT

Chris Pitt outlined the main discussions from the weekend, which he and Martin Callow had attended:

- For the 2019 100 onwards, entries will be online only.
- The national Chair Gail Elrick is having regular meetings with the Chief Executive of the Ramblers.
- Data protection. There will be a change to legislation in 2018. There will be an update from the national Executive Committee (NEC) in due course.
- There was a suggestion that leaders might be required to call a register at the beginning of social walks. This had been returned to the NEC for clarification. In the meantime guests who are not LDWA members will be required to fill in a form which will be returned to them at the end of the walk. (Anne Brown would produce a form.)
- Guests can attend up to three social walks before they will be required to join the LDWA.
- National Trust charges for Group events on their land. Groups will only be charged if they use car parks or locate checkpoints on NT land.
- 100 rules. Entrants who are disqualified [on the event] and choose to continue walking will be reported to the NEC and will receive a sanction such as suspension of membership.

13. GROUP SUPPORT FOR THE WYE FOREST 50 (APRIL 2018) AND THE CINQUE PORTS 100 (MAY 2018)

Martin Callow said there will be five Dorset Group volunteers supporting the Wye Forest 50 event, at the checkpoint at English Bicknor.

Martin Callow announced that there would be at least two shifts to cover the Dorset Group checkpoint on the Cinque Ports 100. [Post-meeting note: the checkpoint is now at Folkestone NOT Capel-le-Ferne]. He said that volunteers would be able to express a preference for which shift they do. Chris Pitt asked that if Dorset Group members are also volunteering elsewhere on the Cinque Ports 100, they should notify Martin Callow, so that the Committee is aware.

14. DATES OF 2018 COMMITTEE MEETINGS & AGM

Martin Callow said that the next Committee meeting would be Friday 2 February. The rest of the Committee dates and the date of the AGM will be decided then. Robert Powell said that he would not be averse to moving the venue for the AGM: members should come forward with suggestions. A new venue would also be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

15. AOB

- Sandra Brown spoke about the case for a Dorset National Park and highlighted her article in the current *Strider*. She said that Dorset had been on the 1945 list of areas to be a National Park and so this is unfinished business. She said that surveys rate Dorset's environment as among the best in the country, and that a National Park would encourage inward investment to the county as well increased funding. It would be a partner for any future local government in the county. She said that Natural England is due to further evaluate the case in 2018. She encouraged members who want to know more to visit the Dorset National Park website.
- Julie Bardswell announced that the Dorset Group 25th anniversary will be celebrated over the weekend of 6-7 October 2018 with a party at Cerne Abbas village hall on the Saturday and that Phil Bardswell will lead an anniversary walk on the Sunday - the very same walk as that led 25 years ago. There would be further details in due course.
- Richard Brown said that someone was needed to handle publicity for the Group as we have a low profile in *Strider* and elsewhere. Martin Callow said that a volunteer can be co-opted onto the Committee. Richard Brown said that the person need not necessarily be on the Committee.