

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION
DORSET GROUP
COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual Committee Meeting (online), Thursday 9 Apr 2020 7.00 pm

Committee Members present:

Chris Pitt (CP) (Chair)
Robert Powell (RP) (Treasurer)
Pat Clifton (PC) (Group Secretary)
Anne Brown (AB) (Walks Secretary)
Martin Callow (MC)
Ian Brown (IB)
Richard Lang (RL)

1. Chairman's welcome

CP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies, all committee members were present.

3. Financial update

RP had distributed, by email, a copy of the treasurer's report to the committee members prior to the meeting. It contained the following information:

- i. The Group bank account statement for the period ending 21 March 2020 shows a balance of £11,561.23. Having regard to cheques uncashed at that date, cheques written since and taking account of income received since, the bank account balance as at 7 April was £11,258.69.

The group also has a £200 retention held by agreement with SiEntries Limited for refunds to entrants on any Dorset LDWA challenge event. Therefore, the total cash assets of the group as at 7 April amount to £11,458.69.

- ii. With all events enabled through SiEntries being postponed or cancelled the company has been under significant pressure, yet it is handling the situation extremely well, primarily through a series of helpful and informative newsletters. The company has advised that in discussion with its bank and card acquirer, who process card payments, the way online entries fees are managed can never be the same again. Every person who has made a payment to the company for a particular postponed or cancelled event could issue a chargeback against the company for a service not received (i.e. the event they entered didn't go ahead). The card acquirer would then make an £18 chargeback fee per person to the company, an amount which the company is forced to pass on to the event organiser.

As a result, a tiered approach through a new SiEntries Payment Schedule is now in place such that all organisers will now receive payments later than hitherto, with 25% of the entry fees being paid a week after the event. The company will not deduct any of its fees until then, which is a delay on the previous arrangement. Our group is fortunate in that having a healthy level of funds in the bank it is largely unaffected by these changes, although many other organisations may not be in such an advantageous position.

Because of the potential for chargeback the group strategy of asking entrants to the Cerne Giant whether they wanted a full refund or to defray group costs, with any surplus going to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance charity, was the right approach. The group was also in a fortunate position in that the refunds made by SiEntries to Cerne Giant entrants were covered by entry fees to the Dorset Duddle, thus avoiding complications of having to make a payment to SiEntries in order for the company to make refunds. The strategy of opening up entries to group events no earlier than six months before an event takes place was extremely beneficial when the Cerne Giant was cancelled, as refunds were able to be made by SiEntries electronically rather than by cheque. Once six months has elapsed it is not possible for SiEntries to make refunds in this way.

- iii. Payments were made to a few members who had expenses claims. A request was made by a member to pay by BACS, something that the group cannot do under its current banking arrangement, having to make all payments by cheque. While this might seem antiquated it does have benefits in respect of the safety of group funds, as over the months' emails have been received purporting to come from a committee member asking for a quick payment to be made. The most recent of these scam emails was received at the end of March. Therefore, the existing method of payment by cheque will continue.
- iv. The combined outturns for the Cerne Giant marshals' event held on 1 March 2020 and the cancelled Cerne Giant, which was due to be held on 22 March 2020, will be reported to the next meeting. At this juncture it looks as though the group will easily cover all its costs for the Cerne Giant with a substantial payment to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance charity.
- v. A deposit of £150 has been made to The Fox Inn at Ansty for the group AGM lunch (booked for 8 Nov 2020).
- vi. The arrangement for Martin Callow to sign cheques has not yet been put in place due the absence of personal contact with some of those involved in the process. This isn't causing a problem at this time, with few payments expected to be made until the time of the Dorset Duddle in August.

4. Planning for the Dorset Doddle

There had been some discussion, via email, regarding whether planning for the Doodle should go ahead at present. This is due to uncertainty as to whether the event will take place, because it is not known how long the current arrangements for social distancing will continue. The committee reached the general consensus that planning should be put on hold for now and the decision reviewed in early June. CP stated that entries for the Doodle have been frozen until 1 Jun 2020. There are currently 84 entries, making entry fees of £1363.

5. Social walks Programme and information for Strider

AB asked whether our group should submit a programme of social walks to be published in Strider, covering the period Sep to Dec 2020, knowing that some or all of it may need to be cancelled later. She said the deadline for this is in approximately one month's time and that we have the option of instead putting a notice in Strider, referring members to the website for walk details. It was agreed that AB should ask members to submit details of walks for the period Oct to Dec 2020, which will be after the planned group trip to Wales (24-28 Sep). This will mean that some social walks for our group will appear in Strider, along with a notice to check the website for updates.

Action: AB

6. Dorset challenge walks in 2021 and 7. The Dorset Giant

Items 6 & 7 were discussed together as the schedule for the South West Triple Challenge (made up of the Dorset Giant, the Wellington Boot and the Wye Forest 50) determines in which year the Dorset Giant will next be run. This in turn determines which challenge walk the Dorset Group will run next year (in addition to the Dorset Doodle). Our group was due to run the Dorset Giant again in 2022, but the Cornwall & Devon Group may decide to run the Wellington Boot in 2021 (as it did not take place in 2020) and the Bristol & West Group may therefore wish to run the Wye Forest 50 in 2022, instead of 2021. If this happens the Dorset Giant will next take place in 2023. PC agreed to contact the secretaries of the Cornwall & Devon Group and the Bristol & West Group to find out what they are planning to do.

Action: PC

If the Wye Forest 50 takes place as scheduled in 2021 (with the Wellington Boot being missed out of the current cycle) the Dorset Group will run the Doodle West in 2021 (in October, as agreed at the committee meeting in 9 Jan 2020), and the Dorset Giant will be run again as scheduled in 2022. However, if the intention is that the Wellington Boot is run in 2021 and the Wye Forest 50 in 2022, then the Dorset Group will run the Cerne Giant in 2021, the Doodle West in 2022 and the Dorset Giant in 2023. MC pointed out that, if the group does run the Cerne Giant next year, the village halls will have to be re-booked soon, as it is less than a year away.

8. New Dorset LDWA website page

AB said that she had been asked to comment on the new Dorset group webpage on the LDWA website. The deadline for feedback, of 3 days, had been very tight before the webpage was going back for improvement. AB had been provided with a working model of the London Group's webpage and a non-working model of the Dorset Group's page to comment on.

CP pointed out an inconsistency in the way the group name was worded and AB said she would feed that back to the website designer.

Action: AB

There was some discussion regarding when the roll out date would be and why this was taking place when the website was supposedly frozen. AB said that this work was considered to be minor amendments, within the overall freeze.

Comments were made regarding the money being spent on this and how funding for the website would be delayed, due to cancellation of challenge events this year and the changes made by SI Entries.

9. New Dorset LDWA logo

AB suggested that with walks not taking place and many members spending increased amounts of time at home, this would be a good time to ask for design ideas for the new Dorset LDWA logo (as agreed at the 2019 AGM).

CP agreed to draft an email, to be sent to primary members of the group, with information on how they can submit their ideas for the new design.

Action: CP

10. Dogs on Walks policy

AB said that she would redraft the policy so that it could be discussed at the next committee meeting.

MC stated that in the committee meeting held 9 Jan 2020, we agreed only group members should be allowed to bring dogs on social walks and he asked how we would be communicating that decision to potential walkers (members and non-members). AB agreed to ask for a notice to be put in Strider containing this information.

Action: AB

11. Date of the next committee meeting

The committee agreed to hold another virtual meeting on 1 Jun 2020 at 7.00 pm.

12. AOB

- CP said that he had agreed to Deirdre Flegg's proposal that she should give to the NHS 130 plastic seat covers she was holding on behalf of the group.

- CP asked the committee to consider our policy with regard to the food left over at the end of a challenge event. There was some discussion as to whether the food should be given away and the cost written off, or whether we should keep what we can, considering storage and expiry dates. RP suggested we should give any suitable remaining food to a local food bank. AB pointed out we would need to be cautious with the quantities. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

Please note:

- Approval of the minutes and discussion of matters arising from the committee meeting 9 Jan 2020 (if not already covered in the virtual meetings) will take place when the committee is able to meet in person once more.
- A diary of events has not been included with these minutes due to uncertainty at present with regard to if/when events will take place.