



Local Groups Weekend – Sunday 14th November

Notes & Action Points from the Formal Meeting

Welcome & Apologies

Helen Franklin agreed to act as chair & opened the meeting.
Apologies were received from Graham Smith – NEC, Strider Editor.

Actions from 2020 Meeting

The majority of actions have been completed or will be addressed as part of the agenda.
John Elrick & Elaine Oddie will develop a standard template for local groups to present their final accounts & this will be uploaded to the Toolkit.

Reserves Policy

The LDWA Finance Officer – John Elrick, explained that the NEC have been working on the reserves policy to ensure that the association's reserves are utilized effectively & returns are maximized. The 2020-2025 Business Plan sets out the core, day to day, activities of the LDWA as well as a number of strategic projects aimed at securing its future viability. Funding for these projects will come from the Strategic Development Fund & the Reserves Policy will enable the NEC to make decisions about the allocation of monies from surpluses to this fund.

The NEC have identified 4 areas that require allocation of funding;

1. Core work (e.g.; publication of Strider, AGM, Insurance, postage, bank costs)
2. Contingencies (in case of unforeseen financial costs)
3. Strategic Development (e.g.; replacement of the IT system)
4. Non-Core Projects (e.g.; honoraria, additional publicity & promotions)

The funds in areas 1, 2 & 4 will be placed in instant access or short-term notice accounts. Funds in area 3 will be placed in longer term notice accounts. The funds allocated to the core work fund will be the equivalent of 12 months running costs. The funds for the next 12 months will be allocated to the above areas in January 2022.

Further information about the Reserves Policy can be found in the LDWA Reserves Policy Paper which was sent out in advance of the meeting.

The next step is to put the Reserves Policy to members at the AGM.

Project to Replace the Current Website

The project to replace the current website is to ensure we move to a more standard, stable & secure platform that underpins all our business systems. The added advantage is that this will also have a much



more modern look & feel, be more intuitive for users & more easily accessible for our members & Local Group Officers.

The IT sub-committee (Stuart Bain, Julie Cribb, Madeleine Watson, Pete Buffham) has commenced work on the project and the funds for its initial stages have been allocated. Funds have been received from legacies & from voluntary contributions from local groups who have been charging a “levy” on non-LDWA members who enter challenge events. Following the recent workshops to identify the requirements of the replacement system, the team are identifying the priorities & quick wins. During the workshops, feedback about the current system was positive. A timetable is being put in place, along with budgets, for the different areas of work. The project will take 2 – 3 years and will involve implementing a series of modules. Funds will be released on a phased basis over the lifetime of the project. In cases where modules are not available to purchase, we will invite tenders to develop these.

Volunteers are required to support the project in the following roles;

- **Project Manager – Digital Transformation:** preferably someone with some experience of managing IT Projects on a moderate scale (see attached role description)
- **Digital Transformation Analyst:** to support the delivery of the digital transformation project by ensuring requirements are documented, understood and fit for purpose (see attached role description)
- **System Testers:** checking the system works from a user perspective

If members would like to find out more about the project & the volunteering opportunities, they should contact Julie Cribb at chair@ldwa.org.uk

Julie thanked the IT Team for all their hard work over the year & acknowledged the great work they are doing.

Charity Status - Update

A working group was formed approximately 2 years ago (comprising Ken Falconer, Tony Willey, John Elrick & Julie Cribb) to look into the question of whether the LDWA should become a charity. By becoming a charity, the association would benefit from gift aid which would become an additional income stream.

The working group received support from Paul Fredericks, an LDWA member who previously worked for the Charity Commission, and they considered the pros & cons of becoming a charity. The group recently reached the conclusion that the negative consequences of moving to charitable status out-weighed the benefits & have recommended that the LDWA should not be seeking charitable status at this time.

The main factors which were taken into account when making this recommendation included the costs involved in setting up a charity, the additional administration required to establish & manage the Gift Aid process, the extra work involved in applying for grants (with no guarantee of success), the increased external regulation from the Charity Commission, the requirement to change our operating structure to meet charity governance criteria & the loss of financial independence on the part of the local groups. Becoming a charity would involve re-writing the primary aim of the LDWA to promoting walking as a



social benefit. This recommendation can be revisited in the future if circumstances change & the working group will explore the Charitable Trust option.

Further details of the recommendation of the working group & why this was reached can be found in the review paper which was sent out in advance of the meeting.

Review of the NEC

A sub group from our membership are involved in looking at how the NEC should work going forward with the aim of ensuring they are relevant to the current organisation and its plans and fit for future. The focus is on the roles. There will be a further update in approximately 6 months.

NEC Opportunities & Volunteer Roles

Subject to approval at the next AGM there will be three new NEC Officers:

- General Secretary - Bill Milbourne (Northumbria)
- Strider Editor - Simon Pipe (Bristol & West)
- Long Distance Paths Officer - Iain Connell (North Yorkshire)

No nominations have been received for the role of IT Officer & this role remains vacant (role description attached). There is a strong team of IT volunteers in place taking care of the day- to- day IT activities & requests which means that the IT Officer role isn't as large as it was in the past. The role involves co-ordinating, & reporting on, the work of the IT team.

There are a number of non-NEC volunteer roles which have been created to support areas of the Business Plan & to take away some of the workload from existing NEC members. These include;

- **Volunteer Support Officer** - working alongside the NEC Members
- **Press Officer** – working with the Communications Team
- **Social Walks Coordinator** – working alongside the Local Groups' Secretary

Role descriptions for the above are attached.

The group was asked to consider whether they, or someone in their group, may have the skills, ability & time to take on any of the volunteering roles & to circulate the details of the opportunities across their local group membership.

Review of Local Group Constitution/ Structure

A number of local groups have highlighted some minor differences in the constitutions across the local groups – mainly relating to the tenure of local group officer roles. A review of the local group structure



& constitution forms part of the Business Plan and is likely to take place in 2023. The review, which will involve representatives from the local groups, can look at any differences across the constitutions & whether any changes should be made.

The group were reminded that, according to the constitution, a local group must have 3 roles, as a minimum, to be viable; Chair, Group Secretary & Treasurer. These should be separate roles undertaken by separate volunteers. Concern was expressed about cases where these roles are combined & performed by one or two volunteers. This puts a lot of responsibility on the individuals concerned &, as a result, may prevent others volunteering to take on local group officer roles. The group were also reminded that members can change their primary group at any point through the members section of the website. Due to Covid-19 several groups have postponed their annual AGM & were assured that, constitutionally, this was not an issue & were informed that a government bylaw was set up to protect any voluntary groups who have not been able to hold their AGM. Groups in this position were encouraged to arrange their AGM when convenient.

Volunteer Strategy – Update

The way we aim to recognise, develop & communicate with our volunteers is set out in the Valuing our Volunteers Strategy which can be accessed via the Toolkit – <https://ldwa.org.uk/library/toolkit.php> (Volunteering & Volunteer Support section).

To support the training & development of our volunteers, the LDWA has joined the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Membership of the NCVO allows us to access a wide range of relevant information, tools & resources which will support volunteers. All our members are eligible to access the resources and can do this easily by registering on the NCVO website (<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>) and setting up & linking their account to the LDWA.

To assist the work in this area, the role of Volunteer Support Officer has been created. The person in this role will work closely with Julie Cribb, & other members of the NEC, to further support our volunteers. A role description will be available shortly and the position will be advertised.

Local Group Officer – Job Descriptions & Induction

Feedback from local groups suggests that a simple induction plan, to help new local group officers when they take up positions on their local group committee, would be helpful. In advance, it was suggested that the LGO role descriptions, which were developed by local groups, would benefit from a quick review to ensure the induction, & any other training, is based on the needs of the role. In response it was agreed that the two exercises would happen simultaneously to prevent any delay in developing the induction plan. The role descriptions & Induction Plan will concentrate on those things that are essential in the role. Karen Pickersgill will address this with support from LGO's.



Governance & Policies

➤ AGM

The 2022 AGM will be held in Lemington Spa between 4th & 6th March. Further details will be available in the December issue of Strider.

➤ Dogs on Walks

It was acknowledged that local groups have different approaches in this area which was discussed. Going forward, it was felt that local groups & walk leaders should be left to decide the approach which is appropriate for their group. However, owners MUST provide verbal confirmation that their dog is covered by Pet Owners' Liability Insurance before the walk & the dog must be kept under close control & on a short lead at all times. It was highlighted that, for some dog owners, it is important that they can bring their dogs along on walks.

➤ Safeguarding Policy

Deirdre Flegg reminded the group that the Safeguarding Policies were updated in January this year & requested that members take a look through & highlight any questions to Stuart Bain (Environment@ldwa.org.uk). The policies aim to safeguard the welfare of adults, children & young people involved in Long Distance Walking & can be found in the Policies section of the Toolkit (<https://ldwa.org.uk/library/toolkit.php>).

It was pointed out that there are many different examples of safeguarding issues, including financial abuse, domestic abuse & bullying, & some recent statistics in this area were shared. It is important that we can recognise these issues & know what to do if we come across them.

Further help & advice in this area can be obtained from the NSPCC Helpline and/ or the Ann Craft Trust. Contact details for these organisations can be found in the "Reporting Safeguarding Incidents" guidance document on the Toolkit.

➤ First Aid – Training & Provision

In advance of the Local Groups' Weekend the importance of First Aid Training for regular walk leaders & volunteers on challenge events was raised by several groups. A number of groups have organized & run First Aid Training Courses for their volunteers, including Wiltshire, Norfolk & Suffolk & West Yorkshire. It was agreed that the details of training providers used by these groups will be shared. The Ramblers offer on-line First Aid training to their members. It was highlighted that a First Aid Training Workshop was



organized at a past AGM but didn't receive much interest (2 people signed up). A suggestion was made that a future LGW could be extended by one day to include First Aid Training.

It was confirmed that, under the Good Samaritan Law, members of the public are immune from liability in cases where, as a result of administering first aid to a casualty, they inadvertently cause further injury. However, in non-emergency situations individuals should not give out tablets, medicines or lotions to others in case of an allergic reaction.

It was suggested that the "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) function on smart phones should be set up. This allows a phone call to be made to your chosen emergency contact even when your phone screen is locked. The point was made that walk leaders should be made aware of any relevant medical conditions affecting those attending a walk. This can be addressed by asking individuals to have a private word with the walk leader early in the walk. Some walkers have a tag/ key ring on their rucksack with details of emergency contacts & medical conditions.

LDWA's Approach to Campaigning

It was highlighted that, unlike the Ramblers, the LDWA does not have the infrastructure or resources to campaign &, hence, we don't describe ourselves as a campaigning organization. However, we have and will continue to work with other campaigning organisations, the Ramblers being the most obvious, on issues which are important to our aims (e.g.; Long Distance Paths). The LDWA archives show that the association has been actively involved in campaigning in the past, through appearances on Question Time, Radio Programmes and writing to MPs.

Local groups have been involved in campaigning on local issues in the past & are welcome to do so in the future provided that the LDWA name/ brand is respected.

Finance & Insurance

➤ Insurance Update

The group was reminded that details of our insurance provider, cover & certificates are available under the Insurance section of the Toolkit (<https://ldwa.org.uk/library/toolkit.php>)

In summary, members have public liability cover for social walks, challenge events & anytime challenge events. This extends to personal accident insurance for walk leaders or sweepers on walks or walk recesses (including travelling to and from the walk). Non-members joining us on a 'taster' walk, with a view to joining the LDWA, are covered by the LDWA's Insurance for up to 3 walks. Friends & family who are not members of the LDWA are not covered by our insurance – however, in cases where they are supporting LDWA events (e.g., marshaling), we can include them in our cover on a temporary basis.



It was acknowledged that non LDWA members may be involved in attending & supporting the 50th Anniversary Events next year. Any questions concerning Insurance cover in these cases should be referred to John Elrick (Treasurer@ldwa.org.uk)

In cases where a member organizes a holiday/ weekend away they are NOT liable to compensate other members if the 'event' can't go ahead due to things such as Covidrestrictions/ the hotel closing/ transport being cancelled. A member would only be liable if they are organizing the event for profit. Members attending the event should take out their own travel insurance.

➤ Funding Strategy

The NEC have been considering potential funding streams to ensure the short-term financial security of the association & to build funds for longer term strategic projects. In the recent past the local groups have kindly supported the IT Fund through challenge event and anytime event contributions as well as other donations. It is hoped that these voluntary contributions will continue.

In addition to membership fees & local group contributions, possible revenue streams include selling advertising space on our social media accounts and website (particularly the LDP's section), applying for grants, offering a paid consultancy service in relation to organizing & running large walking events etc., offering internal publications as paid-for downloads. These, and other, revenue streams will be further explored & decisions made on which to take forward. A Financial Strategy with an Action Plan will then be developed.

History Group - Update

Graham Jones asked that any local groups who have planned social walks with historical interest consider running these as a joint event with the History Group. This would involve the walk being advertised on the Meet Up platform as well as the local group's website. Also, Graham asked local groups to consider organizing & running a history walk for the group during 2022. Any groups who can help with the above should contact Graham on heartofengland.walks@ldwa.org.uk. The History Group is a way of attracting new members to the LDWA.

Long Distance Paths & Social Walks Database

The LDP database is a great asset that the LDWA has developed over the years & regularly attracts new members. It offers numerous commercial opportunities & the plan, going forward, is to promote it more widely by working closely with other organisations involved in LDPs. It's important to monitor the LDP's so that they are up to date & correct for our members. Help from local groups is required in this area and groups are asked to take responsibility for checking sections or entire paths which are local to them and updating the descriptions/ GPX file where appropriate.



Further developments being considered in the LDP area include enabling members to register the completion of a LDP via the website & introducing the functionality to allow members to blog about the LDP.

The development of an equivalent database of social walks is patchy across the local groups. This could be as strong an asset in attracting new members & creating a revenue stream as the LDPs database. Local groups were asked to revisit this area & consider building a database of their local group social walks. If further support/ training is required to do this contact groups@ldwa.ork.uk

English & Welsh Coastal Path

A new National Trail following the coastline of England & Wales is being worked on and is likely to be launched in late 2022 (at the earliest). The National Trail will incorporate existing long distance coastal paths in England & Wales.

Communications & Publicity

➤ 50th Anniversary

The NEC are aiming to get as much publicity as possible, both nationally & locally, during our 50th Anniversary year – in particular for the Big Walk over the weekend of 18th & 19th June. We are working with Phoebe Smith to increase our profile during 2022 by hopefully securing features/ appearances on relevant TV & radio programmes. Local groups are encouraged to get as much local publicity as possible for their events & to contact Julian White for advice & support in getting this in place. Groups were asked to notify Julian of any local publicity secured for the anniversary events.

➤ Social Media

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp are being used to promote the LDWA & are helping us to recruit new members (membership of the Facebook Group has reached 12,000). A coordinated weekly theme, to be promoted across each of these, has started & is being further developed.

A new volunteer role, Social Media Manager, has been created to co-ordinate these weekly themes and liaise with the volunteers who manage each of the four platforms to ensure they are being managed in a consistent and joined up way. A volunteer recently came forward to take up this role.

In addition to a general Facebook Group, the LDWA has a separate LDPs Facebook Group. It was suggested that the two groups should be linked.

➤ Strider



In addition to the current Strider which is sent out to members (and is available on-line), an outward facing, on-line version of Strider is being considered which would feature content aimed at engaging new members.

2022 Local Groups Weekend

The 2022 LGW will be held in the Peak District between Friday 11th & Sunday 13th November. The High Peak Group agreed to host the event & work with Karen to book an appropriate venue.

AOB

➤ Actions from the LGW

Karen acknowledged that we had covered a lot of ground over the weekend & thanked everyone for sharing their ideas & contributing to the discussions & workshops. The importance of taking ideas & actions back to their local group committees for discussion and implementation was reinforced.

The April edition of Strider will feature an article about, & photos from, the LGW. The aim is to include details of changes that LGW reps plan to discuss & introduce as a result of attending the weekend. The group was asked to send details of the main actions they will aim to introduce to Karen by the beginning of December.

➤ Thank You from Graham Smith – Strider Editor

Graham Smith sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting. Graham stands down from his role as Strider Editor in March 2022 &, on his behalf, he asked Karen to thank all the local groups for their contributions to Strider during his time as Editor. He made the point that without local group input, there would not be a magazine. He requested that local groups send through information, articles & photos relating to their 50th Anniversary celebrations throughout 2022.

➤ Thank You from Julie Cribb - Chair

Julie thanked the representatives for their hard work, patience & honest feedback over the weekend. She also thanked the group for making the NEC members welcome at what is, essentially, the LGO's event. Finally, on behalf of Naomi & Hannah, she thanked everyone for their help & support over the three days.

Helen was thanked for doing a great job in chairing the meeting!

The meeting was closed.



Summary of Actions from Formal Meeting

| Action | Who Responsible | When By |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Actions from 2020 Meeting: Develop a standard template for presentation of local group's final accounts & upload to the Toolkit | JE/ EO | End Jan 2022 |
| Reserves Policy: Present to the 2022 AGM | JE | 6 th March |
| Project to Replace the Current Website: Contact Julie Cribb at chair@ldwa.org.uk if interested in volunteering opportunities as part of the IT Project | All | Ongoing |
| Volunteering Opportunities: Circulate details of volunteering opportunities across your local group membership & request interested individuals contact the following for further information; IT Officer - internet@ldwa.org.uk Volunteer Support Officer - chair@ldwa.org.uk Press Officer - communications@ldwa.org.uk Social Walks Coordinator - groups@ldwa.org.uk | All | ASAP |
| Local Group Role Description & Induction: Review LGO role descriptions & develop an induction plan for new LGO's Volunteers to support the above work to contact Karen on groups@ldwa.org.uk | KP (lead) All | End March 2022 End January 2022 |
| Safeguarding Policy: Review the policies & send any questions to Stuart Bain (Environment@ldwa.org.uk) | All | End December 2022 |
| First Aid Training: Send details of First Aid Training Providers used by local groups to groups@ldwa.org.uk for sharing | All | ASAP |
| History Group – Update: Contact Graham Jones with details of new or planned local group walks which can be run jointly with the History Group - heartofengland.walks@ldwa.org.uk | All | Ongoing |
| Long Distance Paths Database: Any local groups interested in monitoring/ checking sections of long-distance paths local to them to contact chair@ldwa.org.uk (until the new LDP Officer is in place from March 2022) | All | Ongoing |



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| <p>Social Walks Database: Local groups asked to start/ further develop the social walks database if possible. For further support & guidance contact groups@ldwa.org.uk</p> | All | Ongoing |
| <p>50th Anniversary – Plans & Publicity: Local Groups to;</p> <p>Develop plans for the 50th Anniversary in cases where they haven't had a chance yet (special request for events during Jan/ Feb/ Mar 2022 & over the weekend of the Big Walk)</p> <p>Notify Karen Pickersgill of 50th Anniversary events to be included in the April Edition of Strider (Groups@ldwa.org.uk)</p> <p>Publicize plans locally via social media, local media & publications</p> <p>Contact Julian White for advice & support with the above (Communications@ldwa.org.uk)</p> <p>Notify Julian of local media coverage/ advertising of 50th Anniversary events</p> <p>Forward articles & photos linked to local group Anniversary celebrations to Graham Smith/ Simon Pipe (Editor@ldwa.org.uk)</p> <p>Forward recipes for the LDWA Cookery Book to Julia Warman (Membership@ldwa.org.uk)</p> | <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All/ Members</p> | <p>By end 2021</p> <p>Friday 15th February</p> <p>To coincide with the event taking place</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Before Strider deadlines – (15th February/ 15th June/ 15th September)</p> <p>End December 2021</p> |
| <p>Social Media: Local groups to send any suggestions for themes we can promote across our social media accounts to Julian White (Communications@ldwa.org.uk).</p> | All | Ongoing |



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| <p>2022 Local Groups' Weekend: High Peak Group to work with Karen Pickersgill to organize & host the 2022 event</p> <p>LGO's to communicate dates to committee members & get dates in the diary</p> | <p>Chair/ Secretary of HP Group</p> <p>All</p> | <p>Ongoing (venue to be booked by early March)</p> <p>ASAP</p> |
| <p>Actions from the LGW: Representatives to send details of main actions/ changes to be discussed & implemented locally as a result of the weekend to Karen(Groups@ldwa.org.uk) to feature as part of an article for Strider</p> | <p>All</p> | <p>By 14th January 2022</p> |