

South Wales Long Distance Walkers Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Machen Village Hall, Machen - Saturday 29th October 2022 15:30

Those attending: Simon Pickering, Jamie Lewis, Henrietta Clare, Sara Down, Kathryn Gordon, Rachel Phillips, Gill Morgan, Rob Richardson, Gerry Jackson, Tony Alcock, Mike Batt, Andy Thorpe, John Roberts, David Morgan, Hugh Woodford, Sian Knight, Jill Richardson, Judith Fox, Norma Lloyd, Ange Williams, Andrew Clabon, Jason Winney

Apologies: Shirley Hume, Heather Woodford, Cheryl Llewellyn, Claire Murray, Laura Turner, Ferne Davies

1. Welcome from Jason.
2. Confirmation of 2021 AGM minutes and matters arising
– Proposer David Morgan; Second John Roberts, the minutes were accepted unanimously.
3. Annual Report of the Committee
 - a. Chair's report – see South Wales Annual Report 2022
 - b. Secretary's report - see South Wales Annual Report 2022
 - c. Walk secretary's report - see South Wales Annual Report 2022
 - d. Challenge Walks Coordinator's report - see South Wales Annual Report 2022

The reports were tabled followed by short discussions.

Proposer: Tony Alcock; Second: Mike Batt. The reports were received unanimously.

4. Annual Statement of Accounts and Finance Report
See report. The accounts and report were tabled followed by a short discussion.
Questions arising:
David Morgan asked if South Wales had received a contribution for expenses for work at TransPennine 100. Judith Fox replied nothing had been received/notified at time of meeting.
Proposer: Tony Alcock; Second: John Roberts.
The accounts and report were received unanimously.

5. Confirmation of Committee officers

The following nominations were received by the closing date of 1 October 2022. As a single nomination was received for each position, there was no need for an election.

Chair: Jason Winney
Proposer: Simon Pickering
Secunder: Judith Fox

Treasurer: Kathryn Gordon
Proposer: Judith Fox
Secunder: Sara Down

Secretary: Simon Pickering
Proposer: Jamie Lewis
Secunder: Jason Winney

Walks Secretary: Sara Down
Proposer: Jason Winney
Secunder: Jamie Lewis

Challenge Walks Coordinator: Jamie Lewis
Proposer: Sara Down
Secunder: Simon Pickering

6. Appoint independent examiner of accounts

- Gerry Jackson kindly agreed to examine the accounts.

7. Substantive motion/s:

Two substantive motions were submitted and discussed:

(i) At our 2020 AGM, South Wales LDWA committed to donating a surcharge on non-members attending our Challenge Events to the NEC for the IT project. As the nature of this project has subsequently evolved, including the project now being taken forward on a phased basis, it is proposed that we cease this formal funding commitment. South Wales LDWA will still consider donations to the IT fund when it considers it appropriate.

Proposer: David Morgan
Second: Simon Pickering

(ii) South Wales LDWA has a long and proud history of supporting the LDWA's flagship Hundred event by running a checkpoint at the event. To enable the group to continue this tradition in 2024 when the 'Speyside Hundred' will be in the north of Scotland, significant advance planning will be required. It is proposed that the group

suspends making a charitable donation in 2022 to help build a fund (initial estimate £3000) to support volunteers marshal at the Speyside 100.

Proposer: Simon Pickering

Second: David Morgan

After a short discussion, both motions were passed unanimously

8. AOB

- South Wales LDWA 40th Anniversary 2023: Simon Pickering said that the 2023 would be the 40th anniversary of the Group. He said a number of activities were being planned/considered to mark the anniversary, including: walking associated with the founding/milestones of the group (e.g. Andrew Clabon will repeat the first walk he led for the group, and the group's second ever walk, on 07/10/23); merchandise, with members invited to submit ideas for a t-shirt graphic; a commemorative edition of the *Leekie's Blether* newsletter, and, a social event in September to coincide with the visit of West Yorkshire LDWA.

- Social Media: Jamie Lewis outlined that the new South Wales LDWA Facebook page had now been established. He said that everyone was able to post to the page (once they joined the group) and encouraged people to do to help widen the reach of the group, with the Facebook page more widely seen than other avenues such as the WhatsApp group.

- Thanks to Committee: David Morgan gave a vote of thanks for the committee for its work.

9. Guest Speaker: John Roberts, WH Davies – Life of a Supertramp

10. Close – the meeting closed at approx. 17:00.

Annual Report of the South Wales LDWA Committee 2022

Chair's report 2022

2022 has been a year of proof, where we have proven our robustness to get through a very difficult two years prior, and to come out winning. We've enjoyed some great walks, and members are forever planning new ideas to do together. Our love and passion for the hills shines through in the good work you all do to keep things ticking over.

I'd like to thank you all for all of your efforts over the year, there are many facets and much passion in our club and many good skills that ensure our longevity. We've had a good year challenge walk wise, really well organised, and a good turn out from those who participated, there are many good things to look forward to, and resurrecting the Rhondda Rollercoaster will be one of them.

I enjoyed the many time's either sweeping the event or walking the marshals walk, it's a lovely route appreciated by many who come from miles around to enjoy it.

I really feel that the worst is behind us, with the events of the last two years, and we can look forward to inventing crazy days out for which we all so much enjoy.

Thank you to the committee for their continuous work, and thank you to the walk leaders for putting up great routes on the walks program, and thank you to the members for pulling together to help make 2022 a such a great year.

Keep those legs turning!!

Best wishes

Jason Winney, Chair, October 2022

Group secretary's report 2022:

It was great to see a bit more normality return to South Wales LDWA activities in 2022. With Covid-19 restrictions (hopefully!) behind us, we have been up to all sorts – with a full social walks programme, the staging of two successful challenge walks and active participation (as participants and marshals) in the wonderful TransPennine 100 being among the highlights.

As of 9th October 2022, we had 257 primary members (2021: 254; 2020: 258) and 414 associate members (2021: 379; 2020: 376). Those figures may indicate that membership is fairly static, but of course they include lots of new members replacing those who leave us for one reason or another - we have seen 46 new primary members join us since the beginning of last October.

There have been four South Wales committee meetings since the last AGM, as well as some additional planning meetings for our challenge events. All of these were held virtually, something that was introduced in 2020 and continues to be a successful way of managing a geographically dispersed management group.

Of course, many South Wales members also support the group by leading social walks and volunteering to support our Challenge Walks – thanks to all of you. And a special mention to those that have established *Leekie's Blether* as our much read newsletter – both Dave Morgan as editor, and the contributors (Hugh Woodford, Sara Down, Gerry Jackson, Tony Alcock and Jamie Lewis).

The South Wales group also continued to participate and support LDWA events at a national level. I attended the NEC's Local Groups Weekend in Haworth in November 2021, while Sara Down was the group's official representative at the national AGM in Leamington Spa in March (which a number of other group members also attended in a personal capacity). In addition, South Wales provided a very warm welcome at Checkpoint 14 (Pillely) on the TP100 – take a bow Ferne Davies, Rod Hollands, Shirley Hume, Andrew Clabon, Pete Lamont, Sara Down, Rhys Pippard, Angela Pippard and Dave Morgan. Participation in these events is an important element of being part of a national organisation, ensuring that we are contributing to its growth and health as well as learning from others and staying up to date with developments elsewhere.

In terms of national activities, I also want to recognise the efforts of South Wales' own Stuart Bain who continued to serve on the LDWA's National Executive Committee (NEC) as its Environment, Risk and Data Protection Officer, as well as IT and Website Development Officer (in an interim capacity).

The coming year looks set to be another busy and interesting one, when we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary. We are planning a few things to celebrate that landmark.

My sincere thanks to my fellow committee members for their support and to all others that have continued to support the group. A special thanks to Judith Fox for her sterling work as the group's Treasurer for a number of years, and a welcome to Kathryn Gordon who is taking up this position.

Simon Pickering, Secretary, October 2022.

Walk secretary's report 2022

We've had a strong programme of walks this year, with 38 walks completed since the last AGM.

We've seen the return of the Bothy walk and had the last of the Spring Looseners. Our walk leaders have created brilliant routes for us and taken us to a variety of areas, ranging from the familiar Brecon Beacons to further afield such as Cymmer near Port Talbot, Aberystwyth for the Bothy walk and more recently near Llandovery in Mid Wales, for a walk jointly hosted with the Mid Wales LDWA group. This year's LDWA 50th anniversary saw us revisiting the Taith Torfaen 50 mile challenge route over two days and welcoming walkers that may not regularly get out with us.

For those interested in stats:

Cumulatively, since the last AGM, we've:

- Walked 839.5 miles (this is the advertised distance so expect a bit of an uplift on some walks)
- Climbed 149,600 feet of ascent (again the advertised ascent)
- On average we have around 14 people on each walk, with a cumulative number of around 500 people joining our group walks over the year.

11 people have led all of our walks. A heartfelt thank you to: Jason Winney, Simon Pickering, Mike Batt, David Morgan, Andrew Clabon, Jamie Lewis, Shirley Hume, John Roberts, Tony Alcock, Henny Clare and Ange Williams.

A very special thank you to Jason Winney, who has guided us across more than 300 miles of Welsh terrain and encouraged us to climb 57,400 feet of ascent.

We've taken part in the Meetup trial, piloted by the NEC, and although it hasn't particularly led to new members joining, it has helped to advertise the LDWA and the South Wales group to a wider audience, who may not have engaged with us before.

At the time of writing, we have 90 members in the Meetup group, a small number are LDWA members, but the majority are new people interested in walking longer distances. Whether we continue the trial next year is still to be decided.

I'm looking forward to next year's programme, which already has a number of walks booked in including some special events to mark our 40th Anniversary as an LDWA group.

I finished my report last year with a quote, so another one this year feels appropriate:

"Walking is a man's best medicine." – Hippocrates

Sara Down, Walk Secretary, October 2022

Challenge walks coordinator's report 2022

Alongside social walks, challenge walks are the lifeblood of the LDWA. They provide a gateway for new members to enter the world of long distance walking and strengthen bonds between the various tribes of the LDWA when we visit each other's events. The Covid-19 pandemic obviously halted the usual cycle of challenge walks, but with the lifting of restrictions, challenge walks have returned, and from our experience, so has the appetite of walkers to take part in them.

Since taking over as challenge walks coordinator, the south Wales LDWA have hosted two challenge events; Offa's Twisted Wye Kanter 4 (Many thanks to Dave Morgan as main driver of the OTWK) and the Three Circles of Monmouth. Both have been well supported, with over 100 entrants taking part in both events. Not only does this further the cause of long distance walking, by introducing new members and providing a challenge for existing LDWA members, but also generates a profit that the south Wales group can re-invest into the group and delivery of future events.

Of course, challenge events would not go ahead without the generous giving of time and effort by the volunteers who plan, run and marshal the walks (take a bow!). It is acknowledged that the cost of supporting events is rising, and the current cost of living crisis threatens to price some out of volunteering who would otherwise want to help. This is why the committee decided recently to offer a sum as a reimbursement for travel costs to volunteers from the profits of the Three Circles event. I feel strongly that this is something we should continue to explore, especially if circumstances remain as challenging as they are.

Looking ahead, we already have two events in the calendar. Offa's Twisted Wye Kanter 5 is scheduled for April 16th 2023, and the Gwyn Matthew's Rhondda Rollercoaster will make a much anticipated return on the 13th of May. Planning is well underway for both events. The question of restarting the Three Circles is also under discussion. Obviously we are aware that we only have a limited pool of volunteers upon which we can call on to crew these events, so some thought is going into ensuring that we can run these events in a fair manner without compromising the fantastic atmosphere and experience they provide.

As part of my role I am also keen to look into the sustainability of our events, in particular how we can minimise and mitigate things such as single use plastics, food waste and travel miles. Any suggestions that the group can provide on how we limit our environmental impact would be most welcome.

Finally, on behalf of myself and the committee, can I extend a huge thank you to everyone who has, or will, volunteer in any capacity to help realise challenge events. Your commitment and support is appreciated, not just by us, but by the entrants to the events, as evidenced by the fantastic feedback we receive on the events themselves and afterwards. Diolch yn fawr, dal ati/Thank you, keep up the good work!

Jamie Lewis, Challenge Walks Coordinator, October 2022