

Footloose Walking Club

Minutes of the AGM held on December 4th 2022, at the Villa, Levens at 18:00 hrs

Present 54 members of the club

1. Welcome

The chairman began by welcoming all the members to the Villa.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from: David Armstrong, Anne and Paul Holroyd, Jean Savage, James and Helen House, and Pauline Jackson

3. The minutes of the 2021 AGM

The minutes of the 2021 AGM had been circulated to the membership and the chairman called for their approval. Approval was proposed by Simon Hughes and seconded by Tony Mayo: the minutes were therefore approved.

4. Matters arising

The chairman announced the following matters arising from the previous AGM.

Last year it was proposed to raise the membership fee from £5 to £10. Norman had proposed to discount the membership fees from £10 to £5 for anyone paying by the end of January. He would let us know whether the proposal had made it easier to collect the fees. He indicated that it had been a success.

At the last AGM there was a proposal to visit Berwick on Tweed in October 2022. Accommodation could not be found and we eventually settled on a visit to Bamburgh which was very successful.

At the last AGM we announced that the memorial Bench to Victor Middleton had been installed at Brantwood and the memorial book duly inscribed. The club visited the bench and saw the splendid view from Crag Side on 31st July 2022.

We had also promised at the last AGM that the next meeting would be near Kendal, and today we were dining at the Villa near Kendal.

5. Chairman's report

The chairman reported as follows:

Walking Programme

Phil has had some success in improving the walking programme and for the first time in a long while the programme for the end of this year was oversubscribed. However, as he will not doubt tell you that to be able to produce a varied and balanced programme we require more effort from the members. However, thanks were due to everyone who had put on a walk.

Events this year

In April this year the club stayed in Mull for a week. It was organised by John Davies, and we were lucky. The only rain we had was on the last day. We visited Iona, Staffa, climbed the highest peak on the island, saw Eagles, Seals, otters and even a Capercaillie. Thanks to John for organising the event.

In the summer Jean Savage organised an evening at the brewery in Kendal, with either a trip round the brewery, or a walk around the historic places in the town. Unfortunately Jean had to drop out at the last moment, but like Santa she had a team of helpful fairies who were able to pick up the pieces and make the event a success. Thanks to Jean and all her helpers.

Last year Isobel Williamson organised a bowling event at her club. It was successful and she repeated it again this year, and I am happy to report that it was a success again. Thank you Isobel.

The club also had a splendid visit to Bamburgh. This was originally set up by Sue Brearley and then co-ordinated by Sue Rigg. We had; a near perfect hotel, several good meals, and reasonable weather and some fine walks. Thanks to all who played a role in making the trip a success.

Organising the Christmas Social this year has not been easy, with several venues unable to cater for our party because they might not be able to get enough staff. We were lucky enough to find the Villa. The event was co-ordinated by Sue Brearley, and given that there are more than 50 of us here collecting the payments, and dealing with other matters as well was a lot of work. We had been made very welcome by the Villa and the chairman asked the guests to show their thanks to the staff by leaving a generous tip at the table.

This year several members of the committee were relinquishing their post, Sue Brearley, Jean Savage, and Ann Wilson. Ann maintains our web site, and deals with associated business. She has taken on a bigger challenge; Ulverston U3A, with over a thousand members and a lot of administration. It is a massive job, and I am not surprised she no longer has time for our committee. Ann will continue to look after our web site. Thank you Ann for all your hard work.

Jean Savage is taking a break. She has not been well and although she is recovering she will need time before considering whether to rejoin the committee. Jean has been a very active member of the club, and we will miss her and her cheerful wicked sense of humour. We wish her a speedy recovery.

Sue Brearley has been a wonderful colleague to work with. She has made an enormous contribution in recent years. Sue has been the co-ordinator of many of our successful social events, and particularly of the Christmas and Autumn socials. Keeping tabs on who is coming, and who is not, collecting the cheques, taking down the orders, and much else besides takes a lot of time and patience more patience than the chairman has. A big thank you to Sue.

Finally the chairman announced he would be giving up my role as Chairman, but it gave him great pleasure to reassure those present that another reluctant "Hero" has agreed to take on the role – John Davies. The committee had agreed to appoint to be the new chairman. The chairman thanked John for agreeing to take up the role.

The chairman went on to say he thought he had been in the role for 4 years. It is all a bit of blur, and at times it was a bumpy ride. Covid had made a big hole in the middle of it.

However, on the whole he had enjoyed being in the role, and hoped he would continue to enjoy being in the club, and making a contribution where he could. To the membership can he said a thank you for putting up with him and thank you for the many small kindnesses and comments he have received from many of them during his tenure. He had received a great deal of help and encouragement from Tony Mayo, and Phil Walker, who live near him and were always available for a quick consultation. Norman has also been an essential member of the team, and keeping the membership list up to date, and he has more than met the challenge of maintaining our accounts with a stone age building society.

He was also grateful to those members of the committee who have joined in the last year or so; Sue Rigg, and John Davies. He hoped they would tarry a while, and help to keep the club going.

After a hard walk he said: there is nothing better than a cool drink. At this point the chairman held up a bottle of Prosecco. He said he had bought this Prosecco from Alidi. Jane McWitty, had given it a good write up in the Times Column on Saturday. There was a bottle for each committee member as a small token of the chairman's appreciation of their help during his tenure in the role.

6. Appointments to the Committee

The chairman then raised the matter of committee membership; saying that he had informed the membership several times that we needed new members for the committee. With recent leavers the committee had space for two co-opted members and there were just two people who had volunteered; Helen House, and Charles Brecknell. The committee had therefore agreed to co-opt them onto the committee.

7. Walks Programme –

Phil Walker (Walks Co-ordinator) presented his report as follows. There was a walk every Sunday this year come rain or shine. Club members had recovered slowly from the covid lockdown but the pace had picked up and latterly the programme had been oversubscribed, with a surplus of walks this quarter. Some of these walks could not be programmed (and were recycled).

There had been no shorter walks, and although these were a good idea, no one had come forward to lead them. There was only one evening walk this year. However the club had covered most of the Lakes as far west as Wastwater, as far east as Clapham, north as far as Bampton, and south to Bowland. The walk in Bowland was led by John McCartney, who is hosting our walking trip to Spain in May 2023.

The walk on July 31st to visit the memorial to Victor Middleton, was undoubtedly the most popular walk of the year with 22 participants. Derwent had persisted with his attempt to walk Crinkle Craggs, and finally managed to do it, however only one person turned up making it the least popular walk of the year.

26 people led walks this year and it was encouraging to see contributions from new walk leaders including: Sue Rigg, David Bullas, Helen and James House, and Bianca Hanlon.

Eleven members led 1 walk, 6 led 2, 7 led 3 and 2 led 4. Simon Hughes, and John and Enid, had led the most but since John and Enid are a double act, Phil nominated Simon Hughes as the special leader of the year. In recognition of this he would receive a free membership for one year, but Norman should not worry about the funds because Simon is already a life member, and therefore he will receive an upgrade to life + 1 year.

In total 60% of the walks were led by 9% of the members. The walks covered a planned distance of 472 miles, but if account is taken of the actual distances walked on Norman's walks our total covered must exceed 500 miles.

This coming quarter there are 10 walks promised from leaders, which leaves a further 4 to fill the programme but Phil said he would like more than this so that he could produce a balanced programme.

He concluded by saying that 2022 had been a very successful walking year.

8. Treasurer, Insurance and Membership Report (Norman French)

Norman had distributed copies of the accounts to each table prior to making his report to the members. He reported that during covid the membership had fallen to 55, now there were 82 paid up members and 3 life members. In addition to the increase in membership the club membership was more active and it was good to see more new walk leaders. He asked more people to come forward and get involved.

With regard to finances the club had started the year with a building society balance of £1,392.21 and ended the year with a balance of £1,359.90. There was a deficit of £2.31. The 31p was

historic, and the £2 was incurred because a member had paid in a cheque for the Bamburgh trip valued £2 less than the amount due. The club would write off £2.31.

There were no questions in regard to the accounts and the chairman asked for someone to propose they be approved. Isobel Williamson proposed they be approved, and she was seconded by Johnny Love. The accounts were therefore approved.

9. AOB –

The chairman announced that he would now move on to AOB and that the members who had questions would have an opportunity to ask them.

He said he first wanted to raise the issue relating to the responsibilities of members and walk leaders. Recently there had been an issue when a potential new member brought a dog on a walk. The dog strayed during the walk and was lost. The group had to stop and search for the dog which was eventually found. However, the weather was closing in and the stop endangered the group. This was a rare event but people rarely fall off Striding Edge and the club needed to safeguard members against such eventualities where possible. The committee therefore intended to introduce some changes to the responsibilities of members and walk leaders on the web site.

A second issue which was important was that potential new members attending a walk for the first time should complete a disclaimer form, which relieves the club of liability for the safety of members attending walks. Failure to obtain a form would potentially leave the club or the walk leader open to a claim for damages in the event of injury.

In addition the chairman drew the attention of the membership to the cards which had been distributed to each table. They should be completed with the name and contact details of the person who the member's wanted to be informed in case of an emergency. They should be carried on each walk.

The meeting was then opened to the floor.

Elizabeth Simpson said she would like to thank the Chairman for his work during his time in the post. She was joined afterwards by Norman French and Tony Mayo, who thanked him for taking up the post at the outset and for being a conscientious chairman who it had been a pleasure to work with.

There being no other business the chairman informed the membership that the next AGM would be held in late November or early December 2023.

The meeting closed at 18:45