

LDWA East Lancs Group

Minutes of the Meeting Held at 8pm on Tuesday 4th January 2022

At Hilary's House

Present:

Hilary Scott (HS)	Chair / IT Secretary
Roger Jackson (RJ)	Secretary
Viv Lee (VL)	Social Secretary
Nick Halford (NH)	Walks Secretary
Paul Banks (PB)	Ordinary Committee Member
Pauline Melia (PM)	Ordinary Committee Member
Alma Walsh (AW)	Ordinary Committee Member
Dave Walsh (DW)	Ordinary Committee Member
Jeanette Banks (JB)	Ordinary Committee Member
Paul Raine (PR)	

Apologies:

Caroline Tennant (CT)	Events Secretary
Gordon Stone (GS)	Ordinary Committee Member
Paul Allen (PA)	Treasurer
Barbara Shelton (BS)	Jane Hill (JH)
Sue Raine (SR)	

The Group was quorate and the meeting opened at 8.00 pm and closed at 10.30 pm.

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The Minutes were accepted as a true record of the September meeting.

2. Matters Arising:

Outstanding actions on Publicity and LDWA 50th celebrations are covered in 'Meetup' and 'Social Secretary's Update' respectively

3 Chair and Secretary Update:

Happy New Year everyone. I felt we needed this meeting as it is actually last September since we had an ordinary meeting and there are a few things to discuss.

As an overview, life in EL is slowly getting back to normal. Walks are continuing and some have had good numbers. There have been a couple of social trips which

went ahead as normal. No doubt these and other points will be covered later in the meeting.

I would like to advise the committee that I will be standing down as Chair in November. I will have served 4 years then and I really only stepped in to serve 1 year. Roger too, wishes to stand down. So, there's still a lot of time for others to step forward. Please be thinking about it as our Constitution needs a separate Chair and Secretary. I will continue as IT member until the new website is up and running and then I think it would be time for someone else to take over too. I would prefer that to be a non committee position until the new website. I feel it is better at this point to come off the committee altogether to let the new people run things their way.

4 Treasurers Report

Paul sent his apologies together with an update which was read out by HS. Even when taking into account outstanding outgoings the account still holds a healthy balance.

There has been no movement on the bank account mandate changes agreed in the short East Lancs group meeting following the AGM, but PA will be progressing them.

5 Events Secretary

Caroline sent her apologies together with an update which was read out by HS.

January 2022 - Events summary

Two Crosses – 146 entrants to date, far greater than previous for the date. Limit set at 300.

Car parking has been increased at current venues. Whilst it was up to capacity in 2020, we should have approximately the same number of cars. Looking at the figures, Covid didn't affect our numbers as much as I had decided, so parking should not cause any added issues.

Roger has done a marvellous job on the staffing list. Whilst tweaks may be needed, it is looking very good.

All applications for permission have been submitted.

Route – There have been some repair and works on the route, the majority are to our benefit, especially to the path that was collapsing by the Emu aviary.

Diversion required around the repaired wall on the way to Wet Moss. We will no longer pass the rusty harrow.

Diverting route to come off before the Laurel Centre. This makes crossing the road much safer as the visibility is much better than crossing at the end of Laurel Street

At the meeting RJ agreed to send out a provisional staffing plan-subject to change so people can see where they are based . Also Items to think about: a plan to dry the tent if it's raining, van transport schedule. **Action: RJ to circulate Resource Plan**

6 Walks Secretary's Update:

Currently in the Winter Programme, all suggested dates filled plus one or two extra, thank you to all the leaders. There are now two Marshall's walks listed for the Two Crosses, as we haven't had one for a few years.

There have been two walks of particular note recently, Norman's Christmas Cracker, with 34 walkers, and Hilary's History Walk, with 25, very successful and again thank you to the leaders of both.

7 Social Secretary's Update.

Recently back from an excellent New Year at the Neuadd Arms and we all once again survived 'The Wicker-man Experience'

Viv hi-lighted the following upcoming events

21/01/2022 to 24/01/2022 Old Vicarage Ambleside Walking in South Lakes
Please book directly with the Old Vivcarage and inform VL.

25/02/2022 to 04/03/2022 Hazelwood House, Keswick, walks in North Lakes. **Full**

02/06/2022 to 06/02/2022 LDWA 100 2022 (Breakfast Check Point) **Full.**

19/06/2022 Ramsbottom Round / Peel Tower

26/06/2022 Two Crosses Party

25/11/2022 to 27/11/2022 Real Ale Ramble 14 people booked **Places available**

05/12/2022 to 09/12/2022 Ghyll Head **Full but there is a Reserve List**

29/12/2022 to 02/01/2023 New Year Neuadd Arms Llanwrtyd Wells **Full**

VL is still looking into the possibility of a weekend trip to Llandudno with 'Alfa Travel' as part of the LDWA 50th anniversary celebrations. **Following the bulk email sent out by RJ**, we currently have 32 people interested but there are still 6 places available. **Please contact Viv if you are interested.**

8 IT Secretary Update

All walks have had some pictures posted. Most have had a report too, just a couple missing. As part of a suggestion from the Groups meeting I have had altered the first page to try and make it look more modern. Apparently this causes issues when viewed on a small screen eg mobile so could the committee please give guidance on the preferred option.

I am still posting on FaceBook, both future and past walks with regular reminders about the Two Crosses.

The meeting agreed to retain Hilary's recent screen alterations.

9 Pastoral Care Update

The member who spent some weeks in hospital is recovering well but not joining the club walks just yet, another one has had a foot operation which went well and a third one is receiving treatment but remains in good spirits & the club are in regular contact.

10 Publicity Update

Pauline is currently looking into advertising in the Bolton local magazine 'Here4You'. In addition we are looking at various Walking / Sports shops where we could put up a poster advertising East Lancs LDWA.

11 Discuss Groups Meeting

Over the weekend 19th to 21st November RJ and HS represented East Lancs at the LDWA Local Groups meeting, held in Howarth. We had a very busy time attending presentations and contributing in workshops. A wide range of topics were covered including The Role of the NEC , LDWA 50th Anniversary Celebrations and how we may attract new members.

The latter has been a problem recently for most of the groups and the following suggestions were put forward that may help:

These were then discussed at the East Lancs meeting.

Buddy system. Getting in touch with new members. By email or even phone calls. Offering help/advice where needed. **This was generally considered a good idea. Action: HS and PM to look at how to identify new members and the best way of welcoming them.**

Newsletters. These ranged from weekly to monthly. Not all about walking, some included newsy items about members and jokes. **The meeting considered this to involve a lot of time and effort and unlikely to be very beneficial and it would involve repeating a lot of information already available on the website.**

WhatsApp Group. Exchanging news and views about walks. Reminders about forthcoming social walks. **We already have the EL Natterers group which worked exceptionally well during lockdown but has recently gone fairly quiet . The meeting decided to now start using it to now advertise walks and social events together with the normal social contact. Action HS to look in to extending EL Natterers content, RJ to send out bulk email encouraging more members to join / rejoin.**

Website, putting the walk programme on the first page, change the layout of the page to make it a bit more modern. **As mentioned in the IT Secretary's report HS has amended our first page to reflect this and the meeting was happy with the changes.**

Sharing Social Walks with adjoining groups. **This is covered in the Agenda Item 'Joint Walks with West Lancs'**

12 MeetUp Update

Following the September meeting CT has been looking at using Meetup as a way to increase our profile and possibly gain some new members. East Lancs put ourselves forward as one of the LDWA groups to trial MeetUp and were accepted.

Caroline sent in an update which HS read out

The Trial so far -

Julian has set up 6 local groups on Meetup, 4 are active, so far. We were the first to go live on the App on 12th December (ish). With walk leaders permission, 3 walks were put on. Thank you to Dave, Alma and Hilary for agreeing to be guinea pigs at such short notice.

Hilary had 5 new walkers registered to attend via Meetup.all 5 of those turned up on the day.

One of these was an ex LDWA member who will now be renewing her membership and has signed up for Dave and Alma's walk. I see this as an early success for Meetup and an indicator of the potential it has.

My 'Boots & Brews' walk has 6 new walkers booked via Meetup.

We have 31 meetup members so far. 23 of whom are nothing to do with the LDWA. (There is some cross over with Trial Group admins, to share ideas.)

Since the initial set up, between work and Covid, I have done nothing at all. Everything so far, in terms of people looking and joining, has been down to Meetup sending emails and notifications.

Julian has suggested we have a Zoom meeting of all the local group Trial admins in a couple of months, to share ideas and best practice etc.

Things to consider -

Walk lay out/wording - Julian has set up much of the wording on the app, to cover things like who we are, website details and LDWA membership costs. I tweaked a little bit, using wording from our website and publicity. We can change things to be displayed as we want, if anyone wants to look and make and comments or suggestions, please just say.

Further down the road - There is also room to make comments, have discussions and add photos from individual walks, or just on the group. It would be helpful if people could get involved with this part of the app as I think it will make a difference to our visibility, but we can worry about this once we have got to grips with the basics.

The questions now are how do we want to proceed with the trial -

Which walks are we going to put on Meetup? I assume we will need walk leaders permission? (The 3 walks I put in do not have any details like phone numbers, GDPR etc, all contact can be through the app.)

When do we want to put them on? How far in advance? As we go, or in bulk eg once a month?

Who is going to put the walks on the App? It can be individual walk leaders or we could do it centrally. Personally, I would suggest a small number adding walks as it will keep the lay out and wording consistent. Though, it does have implications for the Admin having to deal with any contact.

There then followed a long and enthusiastic discussion, main points as follows:

Concerns

We may not have enough walks on Sundays in the 14 mile region for people to take the next step up to increasing their mileage

Pace - A long discussion on this but basically hi-lighting the potential problem of having a group of people expecting to be walking at different speeds.

Decisions

Admin - As suggested, to keep things consistent, limit who keys in the walks on the website to a few people NH has agreed to take on the task , HS is happy to assist and post meeting CT has confirmed she will also be available to help.

Pace - To address the concern above Walk Leaders should provide a clear indication of the pace they plan to go (e.g 2.5 mph)

All walks should be made available on the App as long as the Walk Leader agrees.

13 Joint Walks with West Lancs

The subject of sharing social walks with adjoining groups , was raised at the Local Groups meeting in November attended by RJ and HS. This led to what we believed to be a very positive conversation with Neil Harwood, the West Lancs Chairman about how EL and WL could work together. He was looking, in particular, to encourage more people into doing longer walks at the weekend which we agreed could be beneficial to both groups. Some may then chose to join us on normal EL walks and, in practice we would either have more walks available or the same number with less EL leaders required.

Neil raised the subject at their AGM and it was received positively. He has since proposed we try some joint weekend walks with EL taking the two weekend walks in May and then three of the seven in July onwards through to September and West Lancs will fill the others.

This proposal was put to the meeting:

There followed a long discussion and many concerns were expressed mostly involving the difference in the walking protocols of the two groups. There were very strong feelings regarding WL stricter rules for dogs on a walk . Also several members stressed the importance of the leader having control of all walk decisions, though obviously within the general LDWA guidelines.

In addition there was a general feeling as we were involved with the Meetup trial perhaps we should concentrate our efforts more on that.

HS agreed to discuss the concerns with Neil.

The suggestion was made that, subject to the concerns being satisfactorily addressed, and taking in consideration, our Meetup commitments we would be happy to initially commit to one joint walk a month with alternating EL and WL leaders. This idea was accepted by the meeting. **Action: HS to take concerns to Neil.**

14 AOB

Restored A Breath of Fresh Air Website

GS has managed to find a suitable free hosting site, so has been able to restore the 'A Breath of Fresh Air' website to the Internet, albeit with some workarounds to get round some of the restrictions on the hosting platform.

He will use it to advertise Nick & Caroline's walk on May 8th and can also make use of the 2018 & 2019 After The Walk Reports and Photos.

He has spoken to Norman who is happy to continue to be the contact for badges etc.

He suggests, if we are happy with it we can start promoting it via social media and LDWA website.

Here is the new URL if you want to have a look.

<http://www.abreathoffreshair.epizy.com/index.shtml>

The meeting was happy for him to continue

Normans 25th Christmas Cracker

The event was well attended both on the walk and in the Horwich RMI Social Club afterwards, where VL presented Norman with a small thank you gift.

The traditional charity collection made £110 for the Leukaemia Charity

Next Meeting

February 1st 2022

Action: RJ to contact Doffcocker to discuss.

