

Minutes of the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Essex and Herts LDWA, held on Saturday 5th February at Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall

Approved at the 2023 Annual General Meeting

Present: Elaine Oddie, Rita Williams, Nigel Schofield, Richard Haynes, Peter Hogg, Georgie Hogg, Gill Struthers, Dennis Jacobs, Carol Toze, Harold Toze, Linda Fordham, Eddie Short, Peter Tremain, Peter Aylmer, Brian Martin, Lizzie Bridge, Heidi Miller, Ginny Powell, Maggie Stevenson, Jackie Burnett

Bill and Jean Bowers attended part of the meeting via Zoom

Apologies for absence: Deb Garfield, Keith Williams, Rob Struthers, Judith Jolly, Steve Wills, Liz Wills, Dave Wingrove, Sue Wingrove

As the Chair was unable to attend the meeting, Treasurer Elaine Oddie agreed to chair the first part of the meeting

Approval of minutes of previous AGM: The meeting agreed that the Minutes of the previous AGM were a true record. The Minutes were proposed for acceptance by Gill Struthers and seconded by Georgie Hogg

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising

Chair's Report: Deb sent her apologies as she has been unable to submit a report this year.

Secretary and Walks Secretary's Report: For the full report see **Appendix One**

Five Zoom committee meetings were held over the year. Email updates have been sent out to members who have asked for them – they are now sent out fortnightly. Our membership has passed 1000 for the first time with 593 Primary members and 409 Associate members. A welcome email and copy of the latest newsletter are sent out to all new members.

In response to a question, it was stated that we have an estimated 70-100 members who take part in social walks, plus an unknown number who only participate in challenge events.

The meeting thanked Jackie and Ginny for their work during the year. Elaine mentioned that we were one of the few LDWA local groups with a Membership Secretary.

The Secretary & Membership Secretary report were proposed for acceptance by Peter Hogg and seconded by Heidi Miller.

Treasurer's report: for the full Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2021 see **Appendix Three**

Elaine reported that we had received £358 from the Any Time Stagger and Blackwater events held during 2021. Our expenses included Secret Santa and Walks Day and a meal for the leaders on the group weekend, the printed Newsletter costs, Committee costs which includes our Zoom subscription. £500 was donated to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance (£250 as agreed at the 2020 AGM, and £250 at the 2021 AGM). We currently have a reserve of £6533 plus our separate ring fenced £1000 legacy.

A £20 payment was made to Bramfield Village Hall as a good will gesture for allowing us to use their car park for the Herts Hobble Marshals' walk

Preliminary accounts show a surplus of around £540 for the 2022 Stansted Stagger – this will appear in next year’s accounts.

As our contributions to the LDWA IT fund come from surpluses made from Challenge events, no donation had been made during 2021.

The Financial Statement was proposed for acceptance by Gill Struthers and seconded by Jackie Burnett.

The meeting thanked Elaine for her work throughout the year.

Walks Secretary’s Report For the full report see **Appendix One**

Despite Covid restrictions during the year, we held 32 social walks during the year, plus a weekend away, Walks Day and Secret Santa. We had 21 walk leaders, 5 of whom were leading for the first time – new leaders are always welcome. Social walks are advertised in the email updates and listed on the website

Rita was thanked for arranging such a full programme of walks during another difficult year.

A short discussion ensued about confusion over whether places on walks still need to be booked in advance. In view of ongoing Covid uncertainties, relevant information will be included in e-mail updates. **(Action - LB)**.

Elaine clarified that the Social Walks Register is still required for insurance purposes.

The Walks Secretary’s report was proposed for acceptance by Heidi Miller and seconded by Ginny Powell.

Election of Officers and Ordinary member of the Committee

Jackie Burnett thanked both Deb Garfield for taking on the Chair at short notice in 2019 and staying in the post for a longer period than she originally anticipated, and Rita Williams for all her input over the last three years. Peter Tremain was also thanked for his input into the Committee over the past five years.

The following nominations were received for the Officer posts and were duly elected unopposed

	Position	Proposed	Seconded
Gill Struthers	Chair	Dennis Jacobs	Peter Tremain
Jackie Burnett	Secretary	Heidi Miller	Maggie Stevenson
Elaine Oddie	Treasurer	Peter Hogg	Brian Martin
Lizzie Bridge	Walks Secretary	Georgie Hogg	Jackie Burnett

The following committee members all agreed to stand for a further year, and there were no further nominations at the meeting. It was stressed that others could be co-opted on to the Committee at any time.

	Proposed	Seconded
Richard Haynes, Brian Martin, Ginny Powell, Peter Hogg	Harold Toze	Dennis Jacobs

Gill Struthers took over as Chair for the rest of the AGM

Appointment of Auditor: Harold Toze agreed to act as our auditor for the coming year – proposed Ginny Powell, seconded Richard Haynes.

Harold was thanked for auditing this year's accounts.

Donations

The meeting agreed that a donation of £250 would be made to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance. A suggestion was made that this amount could be increased given our assets. However, as costs such as hall hire and event refreshments are rising, it was agreed to remain at this amount for the coming year.

The meeting approved in advance a £100 donation to the Mountain Rescue team supporting The Trans-Pennine 100.

There were no further suggestions for donations.

The meeting agreed to renew the policy of allowing the Committee to make discretionary donations up to a total amount of £100 during the year.

Social walks programme

Walks Day: Hatfield Heath Village Hall has been booked for Sunday 17th July and there will again be a choice of long and short walks in the morning and afternoon.

Secret Santa: Nigel Schofield volunteered to coordinate Secret Santa on Sunday 11th December. The venue is to be confirmed.

50th Anniversary events

Figure of Eight walk: Sunday 19th June, based in Sawbridgeworth on the Essex/Herts border. A ten mile loop in Herts and a ten mile loop in Essex. Taking place on the LDWA Big Walk weekend.

Essex Way 50th Anniversary relay: 2nd – 3rd July. To celebrate both the LDWA and Essex Way 50th Anniversary, Peter Tremain has planned a five leg relay of The Essex Way with a pennant or banner being handed over at each stage. Full details will be included in the February Newsletter. Peter Aylmer will be writing a piece on The Essex Way for Strider (**Actions: PA to contact Ali Pretty re banners, JB to contact ECC**)

Keith Noble 50K Memorial Walk: a 50k circular social walk covering legs 10,10A and 10B of The Hertfordshire Way. There are rail connections on the route, for anyone wanting a shorter walk.

I Spy 50 for 50: list of 50 items to spot on an Essex and Herts social or challenge walk over the year. The list is available on our website.

Peter Aylmer also mentioned a 50 mile walk that he is devising between Loughton and Saffron Walden for a charity – this could potentially be an anytime challenge for us.

Challenge Events

2021 Anytime Blackwater and 2022 Stansted Stagger: see **Appendix Two** for reports on these events.

Essex Walker: Sunday 10th April 2022, organising committee Gill and Rob Struthers, Ginny Powell and Peter Tremain. Two checkpoints (Fryerning & Highwood) on long route and one (Highwood) on the shorter route. The Marshals' Walk will be on Sunday 13th March. There are currently 60 entries.

Herts Hobble: Sunday 26th June 2022, organised by Peter and Georgie Hogg. This year it is based in Buntingford with checkpoints at Anstey, Reed and Barley. The Marshals' Walk is on Sunday 22nd May. Entries open on 14th April (**Action: JB to ask for marshals in February newsletter**)

Three Forests Way: Saturday 17th – Sunday 18th September. Based at Lambourne End. Coordinator Jackie Burnett. Peter Hogg is checking the route, and Georgie Hogg has booked some checkpoints. We are looking for volunteers to help with the planning and running of our flagship 50 mile event. (**Action: JB to ask for support in February newsletter**)

Hundreds

2022 Trans-Pennine: We have Checkpoint 5 at Crowden Education Centre (open Friday afternoon and evening), providing a hot meal. We are able to stay at the venue overnight after the checkpoint closes. The meeting approved the Treasurer's proposal that marshals should be able to claim expenses of up to £50 per car.

2023 Elephant, Bear and Bull: We have been offered and accepted CP6 at 38 miles – Norton Lindsey Village Hall. Situated between Stratford and Warwick and near M40 Junction15.

2024 Speyside: we have not offered to organise a CP given the distance from home. Individuals are welcome to contact the organisers or other local groups with offers to help.

2025 East Point 100: as this 100 is being organised by Norfolk and Suffolk we have offered to support them on both the Marshals' walk and the main event.

2026 Hunnypot 100: Being organised by Kent (**Action JB to contact with offer of support**)

Communication

Monthly update: now changed to twice a month. Covers social walks, news and relevant information.

Newsletter: Three editions last year – emailed to c800 members and 40 printed copies sent through the post. Jackie Burnett thanked everyone who has contributed articles and pictures, but it is a struggle to get enough copy for each edition. A possible solution is to reduce it to two editions per year.

Facebook: still attracting new members. Usage peaks on Sundays and Mondays following social walks. There was also a noticeable spike following the Stansted Stagger. Access to our page is restricted to Essex and Herts members, and prospective LDWA members.

Twitter: we follow and are followed by other LDWA groups, other local walking groups and countryside and environmental groups. Posts are added at least weekly. Most popular tweet this year was a picture of walkers on a recent walk from Thaxted, seen by nearly 3000.

WhatsApp Group: A good way of sharing photos and information. Contact the Secretary if you would like to join.

Website: Peter Hogg has rationalised and removed some duplicated information on the website. The meeting recognised that our website needs modernising and to be more visually appealing, particularly if we want to attract younger members. **(Action- GS to contact other local groups to tap into their expertise and skills)**

Equipment: Richard Haynes will PAT test equipment as and when it is needed. Richard and Georgie Hogg will carry out an inventory of our equipment and discard/replace items as necessary **(Action RH & GH)**

Gazebo: Richard has identified a gazebo that could be purchased (using funds from Keith Noble's legacy) for use on checkpoints.

Banner: New banners with updated wording and new LDWA logo are required. **(Action: JB to follow up)**

Merchandise: Linda Fordham reminded us that Essex and Herts branded clothing is available from Peco ([Essex and herts LDWA club shop \(customsportskit.co.uk\)](http://EssexandhertsLDWAclubshop(customsportskit.co.uk))). Other styles may be available – contact Linda in the first instance **(Action JB to promote in Newsletter again)**.

Any other Business

Peter Tremain: The date for the 2023 Stansted Stagger is Sunday 8th January. St John's Hall and Much Hadham Village Hall have both been booked.

Following a query from Georgie Hogg, it was agreed that any non-perishable provisions left over from events would be stored for future use and only donated to other groups if close to their use-by date.

Date and Time of next AGM: to be arranged.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and reminded us that members can be co-opted to the Committee at any time. She also thanked the previous committee for their input over the past year.

The meeting closed at 12.20pm.

Appendix One

Officers' Reports

Secretary and Membership Secretary's reports

- Since the last AGM we have held five committee meetings, all via Zoom. Whilst I do the organising, I have to thank Deb for Chairing these meetings (and to Elaine for stepping in when Deb couldn't make it) and thank you too to Brian Martin who writes up the minutes from our meetings so efficiently. It has been agreed by the committee that members would like to see these notes and these will in future be circulated with the email updates. This suggestion was received with general approval.
- I have attended two virtual LDWA NEC meetings – Organising and Leading Covid Safe Social Walks, and an IT Scoping Workshop. Thank you to everyone who sent me their comments and suggestions for the latter. The results of our discussions are available in the LDWA Toolkit [LGO IT Scoping Workshop - Output.pdf \(ldwa.org.uk\)](https://www.ldwa.org.uk/LGO%20IT%20Scoping%20Workshop%20-%20Output.pdf)
- Email updates have been sent out to all Primary and Associate members who have asked for them, and have hopefully kept everyone abreast of the changing Covid restrictions, upcoming walks and anything else that I hope is relevant and of interest to you. To stop these becoming too lengthy and to prevent too many ad hoc emails the updates are now sent out twice a month.
- I have had various communications with the NEC, mainly about the easing of Covid restrictions, but also our plans for the LDWA 50th Anniversary celebrations.
- I have had email correspondence with some potential new members making enquiries about the LDWA.
- And lastly I would like to thank you all for coming today and to Carol Toze for booking Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall for us.

Membership

- The Essex and Herts LDWA membership currently totals 1002. This is made up of 593 Primary members and 409 Associate members. (This compares to last year's AGM figures of 906/549 /362).
- After a few years of being very close, this is the first time our total membership has been over 1000 and is heartening to know we are still attracting new members despite all the restrictions on our walking activities for a lot of the last year.
- A number of our newer members have already joined us on social walks.
- Each new member is sent a welcoming email with a copy of the latest newsletter. This has attracted several complimentary responses.

Jackie Burnett and Ginny Powell

Walks Secretary Report:

2021 was yet another 'unusual' year due to the ever present Covid 19 threat. Essex & Herts Group have continued to provide a Group Walk programme despite interruptions for lockdowns, restrictions, or hesitations in attending large group events from both leaders and walk participants.

We held 32 ordinary Group Walks during 2021 in Essex, Hertfordshire and London, with 21 leaders stepping forward to offer these walks, of whom at least 5 were new to leading for our group.

Other Group Walks have included a successful (if rather wet) Walks Day in July including 4 different walks and attended by 33 people, 2 Marshals Walks for our Challenge Events, a blustery but enjoyable Weekend Away (3 walks) on the Isle of Wight, our Christmas Lunch Walk and a very popular Secret Santa. Phil Hastings has continued to offer his Saturday Morning Easy Ambles (a joint venture with BBN, which enables anyone to enjoy a shorter, relaxed walk - either as a 'stand-alone' or if coupled with a Sunday walk as part of a weekend of walking). We have also managed another leg of the Hertfordshire Way (any bets on when we will actually complete the whole walk?).

Our method of advertising Group Walks has changed during the year in response to leaders (or participants) not willing to commit themselves 4 - 6 months in advance. This means that only a few of our walks are now advertised in Strider and a list no longer appears in our Newsletter. The preferred option is a reminder in our Fortnightly Updates with full details of all walks under 'Future Walks' on our website. Of course, anyone can still offer to lead a walk months in advance (we already have one for Easter 2022) but leaders seem to prefer to book just 1 - 3 months ahead, with details finalised nearer the date. 'Pop-up' walks can also be offered with just a couple of weeks' notice. Therefore, at the moment, anyone looking for a Group Walk should head over to our website, where cancellations or changes will also be noted.

If you fancy leading a walk contact the Walks Secretary to arrange a day - this will then appear under 'Future Walks' either with full details or 'details to follow'. This enables leaders to recce their route at leisure and adjust according to the season/ weather/ Covid 19 restrictions.

Due to the circumstances of 2021, walkers have responded in different ways - some have continued to walk at every opportunity while others have dipped in and out of attendance. We have actually heard a few welcomes of "I haven't seen you for months / years". Whether you are a regular walker, someone returning to walking, a sometime walker who has been absent for a little while or a member who has signed up but hasn't yet joined a Group Walk - you are all welcome. We have something for everyone, and some exciting walks planned for the LDWA's 50th Anniversary in 2022. Check out 'Future Walks', contact the leader and then turn up at the appointed time with your sandwiches. We would love to see you all.

Rita Williams

Appendix Two

Challenge Event Reports

2021 Any Time Blackwater Marathon

There were 45 S.I.Entries. 31 recorded their times taken on S.I.Entries.

We are aware of at least two other S.I. entrants who completed the route but did not record their times. Any S.I. entrant who completed the route but didn't record their time and wishes to be added to the results, please advise the date walked and your time taken. The results for the 31 can be found on the Essex & Herts web site.

All the recorded finishers were sent a certificate by e mail and offered a cloth Blackwater Marathon Badge by post. Most accepted this offer of a badge.

The route was based on that used for the 2019 Blackwater Marathon passing through Heybridge, Goldhanger, Tollesbury, Tolleshunt Darcy and Little Totham. The large Daisy Meadow free Car Park at Heybridge Basin was used as the start and finish. This had the advantage of being adjacent to the 2019 route and having Pubs and Cafes close by for refreshment if required. As there was no requirement to visit 2019 route Start/Finish and Checkpoints, we were able to remove some of the road walking from the route. To make up the distance lost, we included a section of the sea wall opposite Maldon round to the Heybridge Basin Lock Gates at the finish.

This new section gives good views of Maldon and Northey Island across estuary and has a lake on the landward side of the sea wall. It is a favourite walk for bird watchers as large numbers of ducks, geese and waders can be seen at various states of the tide. Unfortunately, some of those walking after the clocks went back at the end of October may be in the dark about this.

We received some favourable comments about the event including this new section. Some early starters reported spectacular sunrises. Thank you for this feedback. Some excellent photographs taken by Peter Salenieks, including some at sunrise, are on the Essex & Herts web site.

Thanks to Gill & Rob Struthers and Ginny Powell who checked our Route Description and GPX file and thanks to everybody that entered in the event.

Jean and Bill Bowers

20th Stansted Stagger January 2022

164 entries 137 starters 121 finishers A link to the results is on our website

We were lucky to have a gloriously clear day, but there had been a lot of rain in the previous weeks and the night before, so the conditions underfoot could not have been worse. The flood alternative had to be used on the paths and lanes above the Chelmer, which tipped the distance over 26 miles. Keith Warman and David Findel-Hawkins have completed all twenty Staggers - they were presented with a special 20th certificate and a cup cake - but also there many for whom this was their first, which may have been the toughest Stagger.

Despite the mud we have had lots of good comments, and many must have enjoyed the event, especially the welcome and attention received at the checkpoints and at the start and finish. I would like to thank all of the 20 marshals which includes the 3 from BBN, for providing a safe environment and carrying on the Essex and Herts tradition of putting on a 'M&S best of' event. I would like to thank Jackie for gathering and organising the marshals and all her help with the organisation of this event, Elaine for Pacer, and both again, as well as Richard, Gill, Heidi, Rita, and Georgie, for helping to get everything in place that was needed to hold a successful event.

Next year's Stansted Stagger will be on Sunday January 8th

Peter Tremain