

## **Minutes of the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Essex and Herts LDWA, held on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January at Leaden Roding Village Hall**

Approved at the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

**Present:** Elaine Oddie, Rita Williams, 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 Bowers, Jean Bowers, Keith Williams, Rob Struthers, Malcolm Clapp, Mick Dodge, Chris Parrott, Maggie Stevenson, Mike Wheatley

### **1. Apologies for absence:**

Rosemary and Bob Abrey, Suzina Blackman, Nigel Schofield, Graham Ingram, Jane Skinner, Fiona Gosling

### **2. 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 Georgie Hogg and seconded by Peter Tremain.

There were no matters arising.

### **3. Officers' Reports:** For the full reports see Appendix One

#### **Chair's Report: Gill Struthers**

Gill shared some of the highlights of the past 12 months starting with the Stansted Stagger through to the various Christmas Activities. In conclusion 2022 was a year we emerged from the extended spell of Covid restrictions, saw the return of some long established favourites and ventured into pastures new with the celebration of the LDWA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

#### **Secretary and Membership Secretary's Report: Jackie Burnett and Ginny Powell**

- Three committee meetings, including a walk and talk.
- Email updates sent out twice a month.
- Membership currently just over 1000: 615 Primary members and 439 Associate members.
- Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp accounts all thriving.

#### **Walk Secretary's Report: Lizzie Bridge**

- 47 social and marshal walks covering over 900 miles.
- Average of 14.8 walkers per walk.
- Walk leaders were thanked. More walk leaders are needed.
- Available Walk Dates and New Walks Form on the web site are working well.

**Treasurer's Report: Elaine Oddie.** For the full Financial Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 see Appendix Two

Elaine Oddie reported that all four Challenge Walks in 2022 had produced a surplus, and the preliminary accounts show a surplus of around £1000 for the 2023 Stansted Stagger. Outgoings included printing and postage for the Newsletter, hall bookings and refreshments for Walks Day, Secret Santa and the AGM, equipment (including new badges), birthdays and gifts and Committee expenses.

Donations were made to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and the Mountain Rescue Team that covered the area of the Essex and Herts checkpoint on the Transpennine 100. As agreed at the 2020 AGM, 50% of the extra fees paid by non LDWA members on our events was paid to the LDWA IT fund.

Money from our Legacy reserve was used for a gazebo, a banner and two blade flags.

The Financial Statement was proposed for acceptance by Richard Haynes and seconded by Maggie Stevenson.

Elaine thanked Harold Toze for auditing the accounts.

#### **4. Election of Officers and Ordinary member of the Committee**

- **Officers:** The four Officers were all willing to stand for a further term of office. There being no other nominations all were duly elected unopposed.

	<b>Position</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
Gill Struthers	Chair	Peter Hogg	Heidi Miller
Jackie Burnett	Secretary	Georgie Hogg	Carol Toze
Elaine Oddie	Treasurer	Ginny Powell	Keith Williams
Lizzie Bridge	Walks Secretary	Peter Tremain	Rita Williams

- **Ordinary Members:** Peter Hogg has stepped down from the Committee and from his role as Webmaster. The meeting thanked him for all his input over the years. The remaining Ordinary Committee members were all willing to stand for a further year. Mike Wheatley and Maggie Stevenson were also nominated to join the committee.

	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
Mike Wheatley	Rob Struthers	Heidi Miller
Maggie Stevenson	Ginny Powell	Linda Fordham
Richard Haynes, Brian Martin, Ginny Powell	Jackie Burnett	Carol Toze

- **Appointment of Auditor:** Harold Toze agreed to act as our auditor for the coming year – proposed Georgie Hogg, seconded Carol Toze.

#### **5. Challenge Event Reports:** For full reports see Appendix One

- **Essex Walker, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022:** We were finally able to run the Essex Walker after cancelling the 2020 event. There were two routes with 138 entries and 120 finishers. Galleywood Heritage Centre was an excellent venue with a marquee and lots of outdoor space. Thank you to all the Marshals for making the event successful and an enjoyable day all round.
- **Herts Hobble, 26th June 2022:** Peter and Georgie reported that the Hobble from Buntingford went very well, and they were grateful for all the support from all the checkpointers. A venue with a larger kitchen would be advantageous, but difficult to find.
- **Three Forests Way 17-18<sup>th</sup> September 2022:** Another Challenge walk that was originally planned for 2020, but fortunately we were able to carry forward our bookings for the HQ at Lambourne End and the meal stop at Sawbridgeworth. There were 94 starters out of a total of 119 entries and 16 retired on this tough event. Thank you to Peter and Georgie Hogg for the route and booking checkpoints, and to all the marshals from Essex and Herts, BBN and Norfolk and Suffolk who helped on the event.
- **Stansted Stagger, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2023:** There were 183 entries, with 140 starters and 125 finishers. This year's walk will be remembered for the atrocious weather with hail, wind, and rain. Well done to all the entrants and marshals for coping so well in the conditions. There was one complaint from Much Hadham Village Hall about the wet chairs and the soggy floor, but acknowledged the weather was exceptional and admitted that it was clear that a lot of effort was made to clear up

Gill Struthers thanked everyone who had entered or helped on our Challenge walks.

**6. Budgets 2023:** The following budget items were discussed. Elaine Oddie will take all budget proposals to the next Committee Meeting.

- **Social walk expenses:** Lizzie Bridge highlighted the problem of finding suitable parking at the start of some social walks, and suggested we budget for donations to village or church halls for use of parking space. Elaine Oddie proposed we budget £200 to enable walks to go ahead.
- **Special occasions budget:** While we have traditionally recognised 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays of active members with a cake or gift and other 'big' birthdays, injuries and bereavements with a card this has never been formalised with a budget. Elaine Oddie proposed we budget £200 to enable this. Please let the Committee know of any forthcoming significant birthdays.
- **Donations** The meeting agreed that a donation of £250 would be made to the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance. The meeting approved in advance a £100 donation to the Mountain Rescue team or similar team supporting The EBB 100. Proposed Georgie Hogg, Seconded Peter Hogg

## **7. 2023 Walks Programme**

**Social walks programme:** Lizzie Bridge reported that after February there are still lots of gaps on our social walks calendar and appealed for more leaders. More experienced leaders can support new leaders, the same walks can be done in a different direction, or a different time of year and mid-week walks don't have to be on a Wednesday. The Secretary will also include a call for leaders in the email updates. Richard Haynes reminded us that GPX files of social walks can be added to our Walks Database. It was also recommended that leaders complete a simple Risk Assessment before their walk: the form is available on the website.

With the Shotley 50 taking place in August, it was decided that we wouldn't hold a summer Walks Day. Following the success of last year's carol-singing Secret Santa, a similar event will be held this year.

### **Challenge Events:**

- **Herts Hobble 2023, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023:** Buntingford Scout Hall booked with parking at the local College. The date of the marshals' walk still to be finalised. There will be three checkpoints on the long route at Ardeley Village Hall, Weston Village Hall and hopefully Lye End Farm (not yet confirmed) and two on the short route Ardeley and Lye End Farm. Dogs not allowed on main event and marshals' walk – no exceptions.
- **Shotley Peninsula 50, 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> August 2023:** The Shotley will be a 52 mile figure of eight walk based on Holbrook Village Hall. Churches have been booked for the nighttime checkpoints and we are awaiting confirmation of Langham Village Hall. Norfolk and Suffolk have been contacted re helping on the event. The Marshals' walk will be on 15- 16th July. The event will go live on SI Entries on 1st March 2023. Entry fees will be £25.00 for members and £37.50 for non-members. The Marshals' walk will be a 100 qualifier.
- **Blackwater Marathon 2023: Sunday 22 October:** from Heybridge Primary School. There will be two routes - c26 and 18 miles. The Marathon route is planned to pass through Heybridge Basin, Goldhanger, Tollesbury, Tolleshunt Darcy and Little Totham. Checkpoints are planned for Goldhanger, Tollesbury (long route) and Little Totham. The Marshals' Walk will be on Sunday 17th September. Details will go in the August Strider and entries from July 1st on SI Entries. The cost of the event will be finalised when hall costs are established and in line with Essex and Herts policy.
- **Stansted Stagger 2024:** St John's Church Hall has been provisionally booked for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January, and enquires made to Brent Pelham and Quendon Village Halls for checkpoints. The proposed route is via Farnham Green, The Pelhams, Clavering, Berden, Quendon, and Ugley Green.

## **8. Future Hundreds**

- **2023 Elephant, Bear and Bull:** Due to changes in the route, the Essex and Herts checkpoint at Norton Lindsey Village Hall is now at about 50 miles.
- **2024 Speyside:** we have not offered to organise a checkpoint given the distance from our area.

- **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. Again, we have offered help on both the marshals' walk and the main event.

#### **9. Essex and Herts 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2025)**

2025 will be Essex and Herts 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As it will also be our year to hold a 50 mile event, Gill Struthers suggested a Golden Fifty with a route that takes in both Essex and Herts. Peter Tremain and Peter Aylmer have agreed to start planning a route.

Other ideas include a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary neck buff with a bright and jazzy design and a tee-shirt celebrating our various challenge walks. A subsidised event for all members was also suggested – for example a special Summer Walks Day. Other ideas from our membership are welcomed.

- **Beach of Dreams:** Peter Aylmer mentioned this Kinetica project which will be taking place in May 2025 celebrating the coast of the British Isles. Peter has been asked to plan some Essex walks and will investigate possibilities for us to participate. [Beach of Dreams - Kinetika](#)

**10. Newsletter:** As very little material was received for the two newsletters last year, the current editor Jackie Burnett asked the meeting to consider whether a newsletter is still relevant or necessary. After a brief discussion, the meeting decided to stop producing a newsletter for the time being as the email updates provided sufficient news and walks information.

**11. Website:** Peter Hogg reported that work on updating our website had now begun. Peter was thanked for his invaluable work developing and managing the website over the past years. Jackie Burnett has now taken on the Internet and social media role within the club and is working on making the website more visually inviting. Lizzie Bridge will continue to update the walks information and Richard Haynes the Walks Database.

**12. Equipment:** New equipment purchased this year includes a gazebo, a banner and two blade flags designed by Lizzie Bridge. Some of our floor coverings need replacing following the Stansted Stagger. As we now have a soup kettle, it was suggested that we dispose of our crockpots to free up some vital storage space.

Richard mentioned that a ban on single use plastic will come into effect in October and that we still have a large number of disposable cups in stock.

#### **13. Any other Business**

Lizzie Bridge asked whether the mileage rate for marshals should be raised. This will be considered at the next Committee Meeting.

**14. Date and Time of 2024 AGM:** to be arranged.

# Appendix One

## Officers' Reports

### Chair's Report: Gill Struthers

On 31st December 2022, I was reading an article in the colour supplement of one of our popular Saturday newspapers in which then author outlined her personal hopes and wishes for 2023. First she looked back at how she had seen 2022, summarising it as a year of emergence, rebuilding, re-establishing old familiar ways and trying out new things - back to business as usual after almost two years of Covid restrictions. A lot of those sentiments could equally apply to 2022 through the eyes of Essex and Herts LDWA.

Let me share a few highlights from the past 12 months.

**January:** On 9th January 2022 we celebrated the 20th running of the Stansted Stagger with cupcakes, cling film wrapped sandwiches, special certificates and lashings of mud. Dave Findel-Hawkins and Keith Warman held their nerve to jointly lay claim to having walked all twenty. Keith penned a marvellous article for Strider - and I quote him as saying - "It was however the toughest Stagger I had done." He may have been seen eating his words as he drove home from his 21st Stagger in 2023!

**February:** We opened the month with our AGM at Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall. Deb Garfield, Rita Williams and Peter Tremain stepped down from the committee and Lizzie and I stepped up with a little trepidation to fill the vacant officer positions. A fully attended social walk followed and it certainly felt like the good old days! Later in the month, our intrepid team of marshals travelled to the North Norfolk Coast to marshal a balmy but breezy Winter Poppyline - but rain clouds were gathering.

**March:** It was great to see our social walk programme continue to fill although attendance at some required a 25 metre swimming certificate - who could forget part 1 of "Boats come in times past" from Radwinter! Concerns were raised for those walking the Essex Walker marshals walk but in the event no re-routing or flippers were required and we lost no-one. The new committee held its first meeting with ideas aplenty to help the LDWA celebrate its golden year.

**April:** The rain stopped, the sun came out and our faithful marshals, walkers and runners turned out for a dry and sunny 10th Essex Walker from Galleywood. We dug out the soup kettle and the Essex and Herts Rustic Soup was born - alas too late for the LDWA Anniversary Cookbook but nevertheless the secret recipe has been recorded for posterity.

**May:** A month usually dominated by the annual 100mile walk was a lot quieter. Brian had us looking for Linda in Fordham, Peter T began walking out the 2023 Stansted Stagger and a good number of us enjoyed the Herts Hobble marshals event, ably supported by Georgie and Peter.

**June:** The return of the LDWA 100 - the first since 2019. A bumper turn out of Essex and Herts competitors with many walking or running their first event. The Finish Line aside, the Essex and Herts checkpoint at Crowden was without a doubt the most welcome sight of the event after the long and treacherous slog across Laddow Rocks. Our marshalling crew was impressive, comprising both seasoned volunteers and brand new recruits. A fortnight later, over 30 walkers and a dog turned out to celebrate the LDWA "Big Walk Weekend" with a figure of eight walk from Sawbridgeworth organised by Jackie and Maggie. There was hardly time to draw breath before Georgie and Peter hosted a very successful Herts Hobble from Buntingford where we caught up with our 80th birthday celebrations with presentations to both Peter Hogg and Dennis Jacobs.

**July:** Over the weekend of 2nd/3rd July we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Essex Way, the oldest county trail in the UK, as part of the LDWA golden anniversary. Split into five sections, over 30 people participated either by walking or supporting the relay, with some doing both, whilst six members managed to walk the entire 82 miles. A rucksack banner crafted by Lizzie Bridge highlighting the occasion was carried the whole distance. As temperatures started to sizzle, we held our annual walks day on Sunday 17th July from Hatfield Heath with some great walks, fine cakes and a record demand for cold drinks and strawberries and cream.

**August:** Anyone brave enough to walk as temperatures soared during the early weeks of August deserves a medal - or in the case of the Three Forests Way Marshals Walk, at least a certificate! The month concluded with the Keith Noble Memorial 50K - the last of our events to commemorate the LDWA 50th Anniversary - ably led by Richard Haynes.

**September:** The return of The Three Forests Way, the first Essex and Herts ultra-challenge since 2019. There were 94 starters and 78 completed the 54mile course starting from Lambourne End Activity Centre and connecting the forests of Hainault, Hatfield and Epping.

**October:** A quieter month featuring both weekend and midweek social walks.

**November:** The month began with a very successful Away Weekend in the beautiful Cotswolds. Walks were led by Mike Wheatley and Gwyneth Littlejohn (Bristol and West LDWA) with Mike also providing the evening entertainment. This was the last Away Weekend to be organised by Rita Williams. Less than a week later we were walking the Stansted Stagger Marshals event from St Johns Church. A misty morning turned into a bright afternoon, and anyone complaining that it was muddy would later reflect that they were lucky not to be walking the main event (with the exception of our intrepid sweepers who experienced both!)

**December:** Hard to believe that just 4 months earlier we were experiencing record high temperatures as we all wrapped up in thermals to first walk around Hainault Forest and sing perfectly tuned carols, eat mince pies and exchange Secret Santa gifts, and then to slide treacherously around the fields of Great Waltham trying to stay on our feet before partaking of a fine Christmas lunch at the Rose and Crown. Despite the wintry conditions, the photographs from the frost and snow laden walks were stunning and a good time was had by all (assisted by Lizzie and Richard's special winter warmers.)

And so concludes a year where we emerged from the extended spell of Covid restrictions, saw the return of some long established favourites and ventured into pastures new with our celebration of the LDWA 50th Anniversary. Happy Walking.

#### **Secretary and Membership Secretary Report: Jackie Burnett & Ginny Powell**

During the year we have held three committee meetings. After the restrictions of the previous two years it was good to meet in person again rather than via Zoom. Our meeting in June was a 'walk and talk' meeting where we discussed a variety of topics during a morning walk before conducting the business part of the meeting over coffee. I would like to thank Brian Martin for taking the notes from all our meetings. These notes are available to view on the Essex and Herts website. And a reminder that you are all welcome to attend a committee meeting – just get in touch with any committee member.

I have continued to send out email updates twice a month. The main function of these is to let members know about the next few social walks, and to promote our own challenge walks and those of our neighbouring LDWA groups. They are also a timely way of sharing useful information from the national LDWA and any other walking related news or information. So please let the Secretary know if there is anything you would like included.

Thank you to Ginny Powell, our Membership Secretary, who keeps us updated with our membership figures. Our membership currently stands at 1054. This is made up of 615 Primary members (ie those who live in Essex or Hertfordshire, or anyone who has chosen to make us their Primary Group) and 439 Associate members (mainly made up of members from our adjoining LDWA groups). The previous year's figures were very similar – 1002, 593 and 409 respectively. Although these figures appear to be static, we have in fact had over 100 new Primary members join us in 2022 replacing others who have left us for various reasons. Ginny welcomes new members with an email, which directs them to our social media sites and our email updates.

Although not strictly part of the Secretary's duties I currently help to look after the various Essex and Herts social media accounts. I am one of the Admins for the Essex and Herts Facebook page (along with Ginny Powell and Deb Garfield). We currently have 355 followers (it was 263 this time last year). Ours is a closed Facebook page, which means it can only be seen by LDWA members who have elected to join the group and is used mainly for pictures taken on social and challenge walks, or pictures of other walking exploits by our members.

Our Twitter account now has 291 followers and is used mainly to publicise our walks and challenge events to a wider audience.

Our WhatsApp group has grown to 32, all active members of Essex and Herts, and is a quick and easy way of sharing pictures (and a bit of friendly banter!). We also use it regularly to remind each other of what is coming up by way of social walks each week and to advertise other walking related events.

A final thank you to all the Committee members for your support throughout the year, and to all of you who have contributed in any way to making 2022, our 'comeback' year after various lockdown restrictions, so successful.

### **Social Walks Secretary's Report: Lizzie Bridge**

My first year as Social Walks Secretary, has zoomed by, and I'm pleased to say that it has been a very enjoyable one! Together we have walked approximately 910.6 miles (social and marshals walks) whilst:-

Sliding around in copious amounts of mud – hoping not to be the one who face-plants down into it. Meandering across beautiful bluebell woodlands – stopping to enjoy the delicate flowers and a tea break. Exploring London's hidden treasures and surprising dragons! Ambling along ancient routes – retracing our ancestors footsteps. Following our county's rivers – whether they be overflowing or bone dry. Soaking up the sun along the coast - eating ice creams, stopping for cream teas / hot cross buns / and thirst quenching cold drinks. Double checking route descriptions for our challenge walks – greatly appreciating the marshals support and food supplies along the way. Negotiating a wide variety of gates /obstacles /animals – as elegantly as possible, or not as the case maybe. Catching up with friends and making new ones - nattering about this, that and the other. Sweltering in this year's scorching heatwave - tramping over hard baked fields. Planning events to celebrate 50 years of the LDWA, following a banner - walking a relay lasting two days. Enjoying a walk with other groups – both locally and on the 'Away Weekend' in the Cotswolds. Wrapping up warmly in thermal layers on chilly, yet beautifully frosty days – looking forward to mulled wine, nibbles, hot chocolate and tuneful carols. Crunching over snowy white fields – anticipating a delicious Christmas lunch. Comparing the distance covered, on a variety of different devices – and sometimes getting the same mileage. Really putting our waterproofs through their paces, on wild, wet and windy days – I bet you can remember a few of those!

Now for some statistics, this year we have held:-

A total of 47 Social walks covering approximately 910.6 miles, with 699 participants, giving an average of 14.8 walkers, and 19.4 miles per event (including weekend, midweek and marshals walks).

Our 37 weekend walks covered 749.1 miles, with 605 participants, giving an average of 16.4 walkers, and 20.2 miles per walk.

It has been great to see the resumption of midweek walks, starting from June onwards. The 10 midweek walks, covered 161.5 miles, with 94 participants, giving an average of 9.4 walkers, and 16.2 miles per walk.

Sadly I'm unable to calculate the immense number of miles, walked by our fabulous walk leaders, when out recceing social walks and challenge events, not just once, but many times over. We would have no walks without them! On everyone's behalf, I would like to say a massive 'thank you', to you all. Your contribution is invaluable. Talking of walk leaders- where will your next walk take us? Could you recycle an old walk? Which date would you like to book – as we could urgently do with some to fill up the diary. You know my email address 😊

I am pleased to say, that the 'Available Walks Dates' page and the 'New Walks Form', I introduced last year, has been a great success, with the majority of walk leaders using them. I really appreciate leaders taking on board this new format, when sending in their walks, as it makes my job of uploading the walks onto the

website, so much quicker. The table ensures that all of the essential information goes on straight away, lessening the number of emails, for all of us involved. Except for the occasional typo of course!

If you haven't led a social walk yourself, how about taking up the challenge? Last year, Suzina and I made a pact, that we would each lead our first walk, and I'm glad to say, that we both successfully achieved our goal. There are lots of very experienced leaders within our group, who would be pleased to mentor/ advise those wishing to do this for the first time. Links to helpful information and forms, can be found at the top of the 'Available Walk Dates' page. Looking forward to another lovely year of walking with you all, and I'm now getting excited about our weekend at Newfield Hall, in the Yorkshire Dales, at the end of March 2023.

## **Challenge Walk Reports**

### **Essex Walker: Peter Tremain**

There were 138 entries and 120 finishers on the 26.4 and 17.5 mile routes. Gill, Rob, Ginny and I finally got to run the Essex Walker 3 years after taking the rein from Mick. We had to cancel the 2020 event less than a month before the day, with everything all set to go although we did manage to get a Marshals' walk in. The 2022 event with Covid still a concern, we changed the venue and made changes to the route. The weather was kind to us on the day and the big marquee and the small kitchen with lots of outside space at Galleywood Heritage Centre, was the perfect venue. The entries were good, for the Essex Walker, and It was also a good turnout of marshals covering the two checkpoints and HQ. Lots of good feedback. Thank you to Gill, Ginny, Maggie and Jackie for the hearty soup at the finish, served in the brand new E&H soup kettle, also Gill, Rob, Ginny, Elaine, Jackie, Linda, Georgie, Peter, Dennis, Maggie, Ian, Alan, Brian, Richard, Lizzie, Eddie, Kim, David, Heidi, Philippa, and last but not least Mick, for making the event successful and an enjoyable day all round.

### **Three Forests Way 17-18<sup>th</sup> September 2022: Jackie Burnett**

Originally planned as a one off 50 mile challenge event in 2020, the Three Forests Way was pushed back firstly to 2021 and then 2022. Lambourne End Outdoor Centre had been booked as the event headquarters and fortunately they were able to hold our bookings both for the marshals walk and the main event. All the checkpoint bookings had also to be changed – and a massive thank you to Georgie Hogg who sorted all of these out. A thank you too to Peter Hogg who spent a lot of time devising and checking the route and making alterations to avoid fallen trees and a few impenetrable paths. Brian Martin and Judith Jolly also went out the day before the event to clear a particularly nasty section of path that was overgrown with nettles. I'm sure all the shorts-wearing entrants appreciated their efforts. On the day, it was a little disappointing to only have 94 starters out of our total entries of 119. We may not have many hills let alone mountains in Essex, but the Three Forests Way is a tough walk, and the many ploughed fields took their toll on tired legs. There were 16 retirees, but 78 got round the route - the fastest in 10 hours 27, the slowest in 22 hours and 22 minutes.

As ever Essex and Herts rose to the occasion and provided lots of TLC along with refreshments at the checkpoints. A massive thank you to all the marshals, especially those who did double or treble shifts. We also have to thank Norfolk and Suffolk and BBN for all their help in running the Three Forests Way.

I'd also like a special mention for all those who walked or helped on the Marshals' Walk which took place on a day so hot that the advice was to stay at home.

### **Stansted Stagger, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2023: Peter Tremain**

183 entries /140 started / 125 finished.

It certainly was a challenge. We were lucky to have just the 15 retirees. Up until about 11am the weather was fine, then the cold wind strengthened, and the hailstones came down with a vengeance. The runners' exposed legs were red from the battering. It continued to rain, punctuated by extremely heavy downpours, for the rest of the afternoon. Several roads and fields were flooded. Georgie and the Much Hadham team dealt calmly and efficiently as the small hall was awash with 140 muddy, cold, rain-soaked souls, all arriving over a fairly short period. This year's Stagger will be remembered for the weather, but also for the Essex and Herts team of marshals' renowned warm welcome. I'd like to thank all the 21 for their help organise and/or help on the day: they are Jackie, Elaine, Gill, Georgie, Heidi, Richard, Rita, Chris, Linda, Rob, Peter, Mike, Mick, Alan, Brian, Maggie, Lizzie, Claire, Mel, Sue and Ginny. There was one complaint; from the caretaker for Much Hadham Village Hall who was 'not pleased' about the wet chairs and the soggy floor, but acknowledged the weather was exceptional and admitted that it was clear that a lot of effort was made to clear up and was grateful for that.

### **Future Challenge Walks**

#### **Herts Hobble, 25 June 2023: Georgie and Peter Hogg**

From Buntingford Scout Hall with parking at the local college

Marshals' walk – date to be confirmed, again starting from Buntingford Scout Hall. at 8am

No dogs allowed on either event, no exceptions.

3 checkpoints on the long route – Ardeley Village Hall, Weston Village Hall and hopefully Lye End Farm – Lye End Farm not as yet confirmed.

2 on the short – Ardeley and Lye End Farm - Lye End Farm not yet confirmed.

#### **Shotley Peninsula 50, 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> August 2023: Gill Struthers**

Holbrook Village Hall has been booked for Headquarters with additional car parking spaces available in the adjoining field. As the customary evening meal stop at Tattingstone is not available, the route has been revised into a figure of eight of approximately 52 miles, enabling us to use Holbrook for the start, middle and end!

Brian Adcock reports that the churches on the peninsula have been booked for the nighttime checkpoints but that he is still awaiting confirmation that Langham will be available. Despite leaving three messages for the new Church Warden, she has still not returned Brian's calls. Hopefully it will be available, but if not, Brian has walked an alternative route and we may have to utilise our gazebo or find an alternative hall. I have written to Norfolk and Suffolk LDWA asking them for help manning one or two of the earlier checkpoints and possible relief for HQ personnel. The Marshals' walk will take place over the weekend of 15th/16th July and Jane Audsley has kindly offered her house in Holbrook to use for the evening meal stop. However, we are in need of sufficient marshals to enable the main event to take place, and although I've received a few firm offers, more are still required. The event will be run by committee, and I envisage an initial meeting will take place within the next month. The event will go live on SI Entries from 1st March 2023. Entry fees will be £25.00 for members and £37.50 for non-members.

### **Blackwater Marathon 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023: Bill and Jean Bowers**

This Challenge Walk is currently being planned to take place on Sunday 22 October 2023 starting from Heybridge Primary School. The school was unavailable for booking on Saturdays, so the walk is being planned to take place a week earlier than in previous years to take advantage of the extra hour of daylight. The booking has been verbally agreed by the school Site Manager and a Hire Agreement Form completed and returned. We are currently waiting for confirmation of the booking and response to queries on the cost and deposit. The marathon route will be similar to the 2021 Anytime Blackwater Marathon Challenge route with three checkpoints. It is planned to have a shorter route of about 18 miles using two of the checkpoints. The Marathon route is planned to pass through Heybridge Basin, Goldhanger, Tollesbury, Tolleshunt Darcy and Little Totham. The three/two checkpoints are planned for Goldhanger, Tollesbury (long route) and Little Totham. Goldhanger is in the process of being booked but Tollesbury and Little Totham are still in progress. The contact at Tollesbury in getting back to me as the group who normally hire the hall on a Sunday may not need it. There should not be a problem as there are two other alternative halls in the Village. Little Totham, Evangelical Church is not available because we are running the event on a Sunday this year. We will be contacting the local pub to see if they can help as they often have marquees on their field for functions. Otherwise, we will look for a barn. The Marshals' Walk is on the Calendar for Sunday 17th September. Details will go in the August Strider and entries from July 1st on Si entries. The cost of the event will be finalised when halls costs are established and in line with Essex and Herts policy.

### **Stansted Stagger 2024: Peter Tremain**

I have made a provisional booking of St John's Church Hall for the Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January and have made enquires to Brent Pelham Village Hall and Quendon Village Hall for checkpoints. Also have a route in mind visiting Farnham Green, The Pelhams, Clavering, Berden, Quendon, and Ugley Green.

### **Other reports**

#### **Newsletter: Jackie Burnett**

Due to the lack of material I was receiving for the newsletter, at last year's AGM we agreed to reduce it to two editions in 2022. Thank you for all the contributions for the March edition. However, come October, despite my pleas in the monthly updates, I had only received a couple of articles and pictures, and nothing like enough material to warrant producing a newsletter. This has led me to consider whether an Essex and Herts newsletter is still relevant or necessary. News can now be disseminated much more quickly via our website, email updates, social media and pictures from walks can be shared immediately. While the final decision on the future of the newsletter rests with the Committee, I am stepping down as Editor. If it has got a future, I will of course support the incoming editor.