

LDWA Kent Group AGM – 30th January 2022

Godmersham and Crundale Village Hall.

Attendees: Stephanie Le Men, Peter Jull, Sophie Butler, Penny Southern, Michael Headley, Neil Higham, Keith Warman, Eve Richards, Joy Davies, Dale Moorhouse, John Gilbert, Jim Briggs, Andy Clark, Mike Attewell, Andrew Melling, Jan O'Rourke, Neal O'Rourke, Helen Franklin, David Thornton, Nicola Foad, Clare Evans

Stephanie opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. She thanked Michael Headley for leading the walk that morning and to Eve and Joy for preparing a delicious meal. Jim was thanked for doing the washing up – and offering to do this at each AGM in the future (but only at my normal consultancy rate per hour]. Finally, thanks were given to Helen for co-ordinating the event and to Peter for booking the hall – which was excellent.

1 - Apologies for absence - Jill Green and Jim Catchpole, Alan Stewart, Cathy Waters, Graham Smith, Steve Russell, Avril Stapleton, Ros Humphreys, Brian Buttifant, Sheila Briggs, Dominique Micheloud, Sarah Turner, Robert Stearn.

2 - Minutes of the 2021 AGM have been approved by the Committee in accordance with the Constitution. N.B. Any matters arising should be brought up under item 12 – it was confirmed that there were no observations/corrections to be made to the minutes.

3- Chairman's report – Stephanie recalled how over the last year the group got back to social walks after which a decision was made to put on the Andredsweald – which was the first challenge event (across the whole of the LDWA) since Covid began.

She praised those who took part in the virtual hundred and thanked Jim and Cathy for organising the post 100 event – which took place in Jeskyns on the hottest day of the year.

Stephanie then thanked those who took part in marshalling on the events. The final event of the year was the Christmas meal – she thanked Neal and Jan for organising this once again.

This year we have a new way of attracting members through Meetup – Stephanie described Meetup (it is a service used to organize online groups that host in-person and virtual events for people with similar interests) that this was a new idea which is part of a trial to attract new members to the LDWA

4 - Treasurer's report and accounts (we hope to issue to attendees ahead of the AGM) - Peter discussed Meetup first – and asked that people who are intending on joining the walk to register on meetup – this would look more encouraging to potential new members.

The attendees were given a copy of the accounts and Peter discussed the figures. He concluded that the year's surplus was healthy, despite running two of the three challenge events.

5 - Secretary's report - Helen noted that the highlight of the year had been for Kent group to be the first in the country to put on a challenge event. Despite the hard work and time taken, she told the attendees that we were able to share our work (templates) with other groups who were putting on or thinking of putting on challenge events.

Helen then thanked the fantastic, strong committee. Moving on from last year, she stated that sub-committees are now the norm for organising our challenge events. Helen mentioned that she had attended the Local Groups Weekend in November and wrote a report – Kent group members were asked to contact her if they wished to have a copy.

She mentioned how the weekend highlighted the strengths of the Kent group, walk leaders, volunteers, and the challenges we faced are not like some other groups.

Next year we hoped to organise a hybrid AGM – but we need to investigate the facilities available in village halls. This would hopefully please those who wanted in person AGMs and those who felt unable to attend.

Andrew Melling asked about the Kent group membership numbers – Neil Higham replied that there are 424 Primary members.

6 - Election of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer – Sophie Butler proposed, and Dale Moorhouse seconded. The vote was unanimous. The Officers were re-elected.

7 - Election of Committee Members – Keith Warman proposed, and John Gilbert seconded – there were no objections – the committee were unanimously re-elected.

8 - Challenge Walks

David Thornton - spoke about the Sevenoaks Circular to be held on 20th March 2022. He mentioned that the event was being organised by a sub-committee of himself, Stephanie, Helen, and Andy, and this has been invaluable in planning the event to be held from West Heath School. There had recently been an email call for marshals – and this has brought a fabulous response for the event. He mentioned that we have 147 entrants already, so he suggested that we will need to put a cap on this number in due course, with a waiting list. He thanked those in the hall who had already volunteered.

Neil Higham – discussed the High Weald event – hopefully on the 10th July. He said the hall at Langton Green may not be possible, so there may be a change in day to the 9th July. Stephanie mentioned that the event would have a sub-committee. Stephanie has also been looking at alternative venues.

The event needs to be confirmed before it can be advertised, but the marshals walk will be on the 26th June.

Peter – mentioned that he had tried to book the hall at Betteshanger, but there were several issues including the use of the kitchen, car parking and the hall suggesting the need for staff to be present overnight. As a 50 mile event, he said that finding venues has not been easy – shower facilities etc need to be considered. The cricket, rugby or football clubs in Deal are being investigated.

We may have to move the date of the event to the Saturday – there will be a shorter route in addition to the 50.

It is disappointing that we cannot have Betteshanger. Marshals walk will be 14th August.

9 - Group / Social Walks – Peter had already mentioned Meetup – and called for more walks to be offered by the committee and members of the Kent group. Helen mentioned that the committee has recognised that Peter does many social walks and needs help. Stephanie asked that other members can help to put on walks as some of the committee members can get busy in the planning of challenge events. Michael asked about the balance of east and west Kent – Peter said he tries to make the walks schedule as diverse as possible – including shorter distances etc.

The attendees discussed the merits of figure-of-eight walks – but much depends on the leaders of the walks having planned them.

10 - Future Hundreds – Stephanie confirmed that Kent group have the 100 in 2026. Peter described the plans for the event - the Hunnypot Hundred. He will begin planning in earnest, from summer 2023. Keith Warman asked about booking the school (Cobham Hall) – Peter will be looking at doing this in Jan 2023.

TP -100 – our CP is the pre-breakfast stop - on the 3rd June from Fri 21:45 to Saturday 12:21 pm. We have a good number of volunteers already.

The following year we have the EBB event - we are running 45 mi CP in the Warwick Community centre.

11 - LDWA 50th anniversary – Andrew Melling spoke on his memories of joining the Kent group LDWA in 1974, two years after the LDWA began. Stephanie thanked Andrew for his speech and mentioned that the South Wales group have some of the old newsletters on their website.

The 50th anniversary – the NEC has asked groups to organise an event on the weekend of the 18/19th June. Stephanie mentioned that the committee had agreed that an event needed to be as inclusive to walkers and non-walkers. David said that he has booked the village hall in Ryarsh. There would be a walk and then members can bring a dish to share as a picnic - and then there would be time to socialise for the afternoon.

12 - Any other business + members' news and views

Andrew Melling mentioned that we have a group meeting on the first Monday of the month in the Rose and Crown in Wrotham. He suggested that this could be a useful to reinvigorate this social meet up. Stephanie said that she would highlight it in her next email communication. Helen suggested that this could be put on Meetup.

Neal O'Rourke mentioned that many years ago, there was a tradition of a short walk followed by a pub at the end – in different parts of the county.

Neal O'Rourke – offered to walk out and check the RDs of events. Stephanie mentioned to the attendees that the next events were well in hand. Helen said that the committee has learnt from the situation we had last year.

Stephanie closed the meeting by thanking all the attendees for their time. Next year we hope to have a hybrid meeting.