

LDWA LONDON GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

DRAFT MINUTES

Present : Gavin Fuller (Chair), Jim Robinson (Treasurer), Lonica Vanclay & Gordon Parker (Joint Secretaries), Andrew Disley (Capital Challenger organiser), Graham Wright (Webmaster), Steve Radley (Liaison Officer with other like-minded organisations), Jeff Golland (Newsletter), Ron Williamson (independent examiner of London Group Accounts), Ken Fancett, Paul Lawrence, Ken Main, Pete Colley, John Elrick, Abigail Elrick, Fiona Kavanagh, Catherine Gregory, Dave Williams.

Apologies: Keith Mills (Walks secretary), Susann Waldschmidt, Pete Aylmer, Marcus Duyzend, Cathy Phillips, Rod Smith, Nigel Heys.

The Chair opened the meeting by thanking those who had come to the meeting.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising from 2025 AGM

There were no amendments to the Minutes of the 2025 AGM and they were approved.

Lonica reported that all actions from that AGM have been completed.

- i) Committee to clarify if it is a Contact person or for the full ICE card info to be provided on registration – Clarified that it is just where those details are.
- ii) The Newsletter should be used to encourage new leaders to come forward, offering support and mentoring – This was done.
- iii) Address newsletter formatting problem – Graham raised with IT central again and made some changes but this can't be fully resolved until the new website ready.
- iv) Purchase clothing for 100 marshalling - 12 T shirts and 4 aprons with the London group logo were purchased at a cost of £249.96 and used by group volunteers at the 2025 100.
- v) Identify successor for Capital Challenge Organiser – Andrew Disley volunteered.
- vi) Liaison with other like-minded organisations - Committee decided it would be helpful to continue and Steve Radley agreed to continue.

2. Treasurer's report and accounts

Jim reported that Ron as independent auditor had now signed these off. No changes to the draft accounts. Ron was thanked for this. The bank now charge a monthly fee which is covered by the interest earned on the savings account. Access and venue fees for the Capital Challenge are now presented separately in the accounts.

In summary we now have £818 in the current account and £9,046 in the savings account. The advance payment is £300 deposit for the AGM venue so balance at end of last year was £10,164. Spend over the last year was on kit, £400 on drinks/meal for leaders/marshalls and travel. A £500 donation was given to the Ramblers. We also now pay NEC each year for website/IT Some is also spent on the group Flickr subscription.

A change to Capital Challenge accounts is that in 2024 venue costs included food, in 2025 they were separate. Entry fees were lower probably due to a higher proportion of member entries.

In response to a question from John Elrick, Jim confirmed the group now gets £500 from NEC for providing marshalls for the 100, the same for each group.

The Accounts were approved.

3. Secretary's report

Gordon reported there are 596 primary members – 119 joined in the year and 83 left. There are 675 secondary members – 121 new in year and 97 left. This turnover is similar to previous years. 83% get the newsletter.

On links with NEC – Chair or an alternate goes to local meetings which are mostly Zoom and one in person. Most points are covered in the updates from NEC. Much focus this year was on IT.

The remaining equipment from the Founders Challenge will be moved to join the National pool of equipment for 100s.

Ken Fancett suggested blank 100 entry forms be added to the national archive so changes over time could be noted. **Action Gavin** to follow up with the archives lead.

Andrew Disley commented that many primary members are not seen and asked why. Gavin Fuller suggested many join for Challenge Walks and for LDP information.

4. Walk Secretary's report

As Keith Mills is away Gavin presented the report. Last year there were 89 walks and 3 walks joint with other groups. 266 people (122 primary members; 154 women and 112 men) attended at least one walk. There was a social walk every weekend. Keith Mills attended 51 walks – the most. Many members attended 30+ walks. There were 22 leaders though many only offered 1 or 2 walks. Average attendance was 17 for weekend walks.

The Committee has been discussing how to encourage more leaders and leaders to lead more walks. Sometimes walks are booked up far ahead. The Committee suggested that leaders are limited to one weekend lead per month and that bookings are not accepted too far ahead unless there are special circumstances.

This was agreed.

It was also agreed to hold a thank you meal for leaders in the summer. **Action: Committee** to organise.

5. Capital Challenge report

Andrew Disley reported that the 2025 event was held on 12 April. 202 started. The event made a surplus of £1,400. He recorded his thanks to Marie Heracleous his predecessor who had organised it so efficiently and in a low- key way for many years. He commented that there is much involved in organising the event.

The 2026 event is 28/3 and sold out in 3 days. The limit has been set at 250. He proposes to increase the number next year. In discussion on what limits the numbers, it was suggested the start could be staggered to increase capacity at the start point. It was also noted that greatly increased numbers would make the event more obvious which may make permissions difficult. Having a second event in a year would require more people to volunteer to help organise the event.

Andrew reported the Royal Parks had not yet given permission but he was confident they would. Crystal Palace is having major works but the route could be tweaked to go round them. He has 22 marshalls and 2 cars which is probably sufficient. In response to a question from John Elric, he said there had been no real changes to the route.

He noted there was some consideration of a fourth route for the future. A 50 mile route had also been suggested but it would be difficult to have so many people walking round London at night. Finishing in the Darent Valley was a possibility.

6. 100 Marshalling report

Gordon Parker reported that in 2025 16 volunteers including 2 from BBN and 1 from Yorkshire helped at the HQ in Ipswich with baggage and food. Susanne coordinated the weekend. This year due to a lapse in communication between London and Kent organisers, volunteers are being sought individually by the Kent organisers. An advertisement was placed in the London newsletter for volunteers to help at HQ in Meopham. To date, only a few have offered – more would better reflect the London group's size.

Action: group members willing to volunteer to contact Gavin.

London group will help on the 2027 Jurassic 100 at the headquarters in Axminster with the baggage handling and serving the finish meal to the walkers. Axminster is accessible by train. Volunteers can use a nearby hall to sleep (and park). Susanne will coordinate this for one last time. **Action Susanne** to seek volunteers early in 2027.

7. Webmaster's Report

Graham Wright reported that he has changed the front pages of the London website to tidy the information. There is limited control the group has over the website as it works within the national site. Improving the newsletter readability on the website does have to wait for the new website and app NEC are overseeing. Much work has been done on this and there is now a short list of 2 providers. It is hoped the new site (which is a redevelopment of the existing site) will be live in spring 2027 but it may end up being autumn before the new digital platform (NDP) is live. Much of the existing content is historical and too large in size. It may no longer be required and it could be suggested that this is removed from the website. There seems to be a lack of consultation with members about requirements and priorities and little involvement of the membership in the developments.

Peter Colley requested that as local groups are the main users of the NDP there should be local group reps on the project group and local group involvement in development and user acceptance testing of the NDP as the current site is not optimal for local groups now.

Action: Gavin or Catherine to ask about this at the forthcoming national AGM.

Jeff Golland reported much of the information and pricing about club clothing on our local group website was out of date and he was willing to update that.

Action: Jeff to review London group website information about club clothing and work with Graham to update that.

John Elrick commented that as NEC have a large sum mostly from a bequest for IT improvement and that local groups now pay a fee to NEC for the website that there is no need to give further donations to NEC from our funds for IT.

8. Newsletter Report

Jeff Golland reported that this is going well. It can be difficult to get the information from Sunday walks in time for the newsletter. Just a few photos are now put in the newsletter as most are put onto Flickr and can be downloaded from there. Property of the week is a feature much enjoyed. 83% of the membership receive the newsletter which is the main communication tool for the group.

Ken Fancett asked why photos are titled Easter eggs and grass in the newsletter. Jeff replied this was a placeholder name and sometimes stays if the link to the photo is wrong or on other occasions by web error. Producing the newsletter is fiddly. The new NDP should make this easier.

9. Report on links with other groups

Steve Radley reported he was continuing to develop the relationship with Inner London Ramblers and the London Walking Network who work with TfL and Boroughs to use Local Development Plan monies to improve the walking infrastructure in London especially for signage and stiles. The London LDWA group has made donations in the last 2 years towards stiles/signposts and this has been acknowledged. We get regular updates and there was much on this in the Ramblers 2024 Annual Report.

<https://innerlondonramblers.org.uk/images/RingandLoop/Annual%20Reports/2024AnnualReportreducedsize.pdf>

<https://innerlondonramblers.org.uk/articles-62328/london-walking-network-guardians/london-loop.html>

Members agreed that this was a good use for our monies.

10. Appointments:

The following was agreed.

Post	Nomination	Proposer	Second
Chair	Gavin Fuller	Members asked him to stay for another year and he agreed to stay on for 1 year only as that would be the fifth.	
Treasurer	Jim Robinson	Members asked him to stay another year and he agreed. It was noted that changing bank signatory is very slow and difficult and hence having a longer term for the Treasurer is helpful.	
Secretary (Continuing)	Lonica Vanclay & Gordon Parker	Gavin Fuller	Jeff Golland
Walks Secretary (Continuing)	Keith Mills	Jim Robinson	Lonica Vanclay

Webmaster (Continuing)	Graham Wright	Keith Mills	Gavin Fuller
Newsletter editor (Continuing)	Jeff Golland	Lonica Vanclay	Keith Mills
Capital Challenge Organiser (Continuing)	Andrew Disley	Jim Robinson	Gordon Parker
Liaison Officer with other like-minded organisations (Continuing)	Steve Radley	Gavin Fuller	Graham Wright

It was highlighted that the terms of several Committee members will finish next year and having much change at once could be difficult. The focus should be on identifying someone willing to become Chair.

11. Appointment of independent auditor of the Association's accounts.

Ron Williamson had approved the accounts. He is stepping down and was thanked for his work as auditor over the years. A new auditor is being sought. Catherine Gregory agreed to do this for the next year – which would serve as a helpful introduction to taking on the Treasurer role in future. It was noted that Peter Colley would be willing to consider taking on the auditor role in future.

12. Motions submitted by members. None received.

13. AOB

Catherine Gregory suggested using group funds to run a map reading and navigation course for leaders possibly providing bronze NNAS certification. Peter Colley said if so there should be an expectation that participants commit to running walks for the group.

The issue of encouraging younger people into the group was also raised. It was noted that the age profile of Challenge participants was younger. Work and family commitments impact on younger people's participation in the LDWA. It was noted that evening walks often attract younger people as they can come after work. There have been fewer evening walks in the last year and it would be good to proactively build that up again. 6pm is too early a start for people to get there after work - a 6 mile walk from 7pm to 9pm with a visit to a pub near a transport hub would be optimum. A 6.30pm start time would be possible.

Action: Committee/Keith to proactively encourage evening walks – including through the newsletter.

The meeting closed at 20.15.