



## **NORTH OF SCOTLAND LDWA COMMITTEE – NOTES FROM MEETING OF MARCH 2 (held via Zoom)**

**Present:** Andrew Thacker (AT), Graham Smith (GS), Julie Cribb (JC), John Henderson (JH), Pete Mitchell (PM), Lorna Sproates (LS), Margo Forbes (MF), Jan Anderson (JA).

### **Welcome from the Chair**

AT congratulated JH on his Eager Beaver award in the LDWA national volunteer awards, which was due to be announced at the AGM on March 12.

**Apologies:** Bea Jefferson (BJ).

### **Matters from minutes of last meeting not dealt with elsewhere:**

Beach of Dreams: GS reported there would be a story in the next Strider about this project, and the organisers were still looking for walkable stretches of the north of Scotland coast to be divided into sub-sections.

### **Group Website:**

PM reported many items on the group website were out of date, some of them five years old. He volunteered to update the site and would put on some AGM and committee meeting minutes. He had already put details of qualifying events for our Speyside 100 on the website.

JC reported that changing the logo and header on our website was still on the national IT work list, and she said that the Speyside 100 website was due to be up and running after the Elephant, Bear & Bull 100 in May.

### **Social Walks**

JH reported last Sunday's walk from Feshiebridge had been a very successful, with a very good turnout including some new members, and we had visited two potential checkpoints for next year's Speyside 100. We had a wide variety of walks on the group programme.

### **Mountaineering Club Bus Meets**

JH reported Moray Mountaineering Club is restarting Bus Meets in April and these would run to October. As we all belong to the LDWA, members of our group can attend these meets, and would be asked to pay £15 per trip. JH will be adding these meets to our website, as details become available.

### **Midweek Walks**

PM reported he was organising a 'stride out' walk on Saturday (March 4) and pop-up walks like this were likely to be put on our programme either on Saturdays and/or midweek, and suggested perhaps holding them on the first Saturday of the month. And as a trial, and following a suggestion from MF, we are holding a midweek walk on March 16 – the Speyside Way Tomintoul Spur. GS reported four people had already signed up for this and he would send out a bulk email, clearing pointing out it is a linear walk which required cars to be organised. MF, who said that if this was successful, we could put on more midweek walks, perhaps using public transport.

### **Car Sharing**

GS reported that, in response to the high cost of fuel and the distances involved in getting to walks in our huge area, Alison Collins had started a WhatsApp group for members wishing to car share.

### **Laich O'Moray 50**

AT reported the event would be in the next Strider and he would arrange for it to go in Sientries. He felt we would need to make a strong effort to publicise it. JH will book checkpoints and GS said remained happy to organise a marshals' walk, earmarked for September 9-10 should there be demand for one.



### **Speyside 100**

JC reported she and JH had had a very productive and helpful meeting with an officer from the Cairngorms National Park Authority, and a meeting with an officer from the RSPB had been arranged for March 15. JH said the route was almost confirmed, with checkpoints in the process of being booked. JC felt progress for the event would be ramped up after the Elephant, Bear & Bull 100 in May, with the SP 100 organising group meeting each month and the entry fee due to be agreed in October, with entries opening in November.

### **Walking Festivals**

GS reported he had represented the group at a meeting of Inverness Festival of Walking and Wheeling, hosted by Jayne Preece – from Partnerships for Wellbeing, which is organising the event – on February 14. We are an official

partner of the event, with JA putting on an LDWA taster Inverness Explorer walk on May 27. Also, GS would be representing the group at a drop-in session for festival partners, being held at Wasps Creative Academy, Inverness, on May 20. Jan's walk, and details about NoS LDWA with a photograph, have been put on the festival website.

GS reported Mary Atkinson has agreed that her Grantown North Circular walk would be on the Moray Outdoor and Walking Festival on June 18. PM reported that the Ghost Train Walk on June 24-25 – which is part of the festival – had already received 141 entries (maximum number is 200).

### **Joint Weekend with Heart of Scotland Group**

GS reported this will be held over the weekend of August 19-20 in the Ballater/Braemar area. People going would make their own accommodation arrangements, with Dave Galloway leading walks – high level but low level if the weather is bad – on both days.

### **Any Other Business**

*Dogs on Walks* – LS pointed out that we are regularly getting two dogs on our walks – which the committee had previously agreed was the maximum number allowed - and she wondered if this was likely to be a problem, should another dog owner request to bring a dog on one of our walks. It was agreed the group would keep to the rule of a maximum two dogs on a walk, with places going to the first two people to book them.

*Treasurer* – it was agreed that, in future, the Treasurer would be asked to write a report for committee meetings and these would go on the agenda.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

This will be on Thursday May 4, via Zoom and again hosted by AT.