



LDWA

LONG DISTANCE

WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Business Plan
LDWA DEVELOPMENT
OBJECTIVES 2020 – 2025

Introduction from the Chair

Welcome to the Long Distance Walkers Association (LDWA) Business Plan for the period 2020-2025. The Business Plan is designed to ensure that the LDWA continues to deliver services and activities for its members whilst seeking to improve on how they can be delivered more effectively.

In Key Area 1, the LDWA will focus on the existing activities and services that it delivers for its members and the wider walking community. The Association should be proud of the fact that it delivers high quality challenge events and social walks as well as providing the finest long distance paths database in the United Kingdom. The Association provides opportunities for both members and non-members to record their walking achievements on the National Trails and Hillwalkers registers and the LDWA will publicise the services that are attractive to the wider walking community.

The Business Plan will focus on supporting its existing members and Local Groups to deliver more social walks and challenge walks whilst seeking to develop a sense of community that encourages more people to involve themselves in LDWA activities. The LDWA will seek to improve its environmental position by ensuring that such issues are considered when decisions that affect the Association are made. The LDWA will publicise what is being delivered in order to seek to attract new members who will ensure that the Association's future is guaranteed.

In Key Area 2 the LDWA will focus on supporting the volunteers who are so crucial to the success of the Association's viability. The LDWA will seek to encourage improved communication between the Local Groups as well as the National Executive Committee (NEC) and Local Groups and will consider alternative ways of reaching out to the membership via podcasts, video conferencing and training videos. The LDWA will also recognise the contribution and commitment of many of its members who have been so important in delivering the services and activities for others to enjoy.

In Key Area 3, the LDWA will focus its attention on the future. A new website will be purchased that will both enable and enhance the day to day running of the Association. A development budget will be built that will enable the LDWA to fund future initiatives without resorting to urgent fund raising when an issue is identified.

In addition, the LDWA will review the work undertaken by the NEC. The review will be undertaken with support from members independent of the NEC in order to provide an impartial viewpoint on the strengths and weaknesses of the current structure and role profiles. A similar review will take place on the structure of the Local Groups with representation from the Local Groups in order to explore the effectiveness of the current structure and geographical boundaries in order to strengthen the long-term viability of the Local Groups.

Finally, the NEC recognises the potential impact that COVID-19 is likely to have on the short / medium term viability of the Association's ability to deliver its services and activities. The NEC recognises that the number of members might reduce and will therefore need to critically review how the LDWA will need to both retain and recruit new members during these difficult times. The NEC recognises that there is to be a new 'normal' whilst COVID-19 remains in our communities and the NEC will therefore work hard with Local Groups in order to assist them deliver both social and challenge walks within the Government rules as well as assisting Local Groups fulfil their constitutional commitments.

This is a bold Business Plan that will shape the focus of the LDWA over a five year period and in turn ensure that the activities and services that are loved by so many members continue to be delivered whilst reaching out to new members from the wider walking community.

David Morgan
LDWA Chair

Our Objective Is:
To future proof the long term sustainable success of the LDWA and to further the interests of those who enjoy long distance walking.

Key Area 1
Sustainability

To raise awareness of the LDWA, strengthen, develop and improve key LDWA activities in order to encourage retention of existing members and attract new joiners.

What	How	When	Who (lead underlined)
1a To maintain develop and strengthen the databases relating to long distance paths and local groups walks database.	<p>Continuously maintain the user experience of the LDP database and encourage and support the population of the newly created LGW database.</p> <p>To monitor an increase in walks being added to the LDP and LGW databases.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>LDP Officer</u> LG Officer</p>
1b. To increase the number of LDWA challenge events.	Create/enhance the challenge event toolkit to provide support to local groups who are interested in hosting a challenge event.	Ongoing, but to launch the first iteration of the challenge event toolkit by Dec 2021.	<p><u>Challenge Event</u> <u>Co-ordinator</u> 100's Co-ordinator</p>

	<p>Actively encouraging local groups to host challenge events within their geographical area.</p> <p>To monitor volumes of LDWA challenge events and any issues that arise as a standing agenda point on the NEC with the aim of sharing best practice across local groups.</p> <p>To maintain a healthy interest of local groups who wish to host a 100 event.</p>	<p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	
<p>1c. To increase the number of LDWA social walks nationally.</p>	<p>To promote the existence of the local group toolkit and its contents. To encourage members to access the toolkit including guidelines on how to lead a social walk in order to provide them with the tools and confidence to do so.</p> <p>To monitor volumes of social walks and attendees taking place across local groups. To</p>	<p>To put measures in place to monitor by June 2021 to track improvements.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>LG Officer</u> LDP Officer</p>

	track membership queries arising as a result at NEC to measure effectiveness.		
1d. To support, promote and improve awareness of the Hillwalkers and National Trails Registers in order to record achievements.	<p>To publicise the registers within the LDWA and other like-minded organisations and individuals.</p> <p>To monitor success by reviewing the number of new register entries annually.</p>	<p>To put measures in place to monitor by December 2020.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>LDP Officer</u> 100's Co-ordinator</p>
1e. To promote a more inclusive membership that is representative of the United Kingdom.	<p>By seeking to understand the make-up of our membership and how we can appeal to all elements of the community.</p> <p>By developing a publicity and marketing strategy including Project 50 to encourage younger members and by reporting back on this each year, with the aim of increasing diversity across a range of characteristics over the next 5-10 years. The NEC will commit to the membership that further</p>	<p>To understand the composition of membership and make recommendations to the NEC on how to proceed by June 2021.</p> <p>Develop the strategy by December 2020.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p> <p>Start implementing recommendations by December 2021.</p>	<p><u>Communication and Publicity Officer</u> Membership Officer</p>

	activities will be developed to encourage inclusivity.		
1f. Whilst not a campaigning association, the LDWA may support and promote campaigns that further the interests of long distance walking.	<p>By working with other organisations with similar aims in order to build partnerships where they can help with our objectives.</p> <p>To track new membership applications in order to measure the effectiveness of campaigning.</p> <p>To enhance the LDWA environment policy; produce a strategy to identify raising awareness of its content and consider new initiatives raised by local groups.</p>	<p>To commence immediately.</p> <p>To put measures in place to monitor by June 2021.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>Communications and Publicity Officer</u> Membership Officer Environment Officer LG Officer</p>
1g. To provide a coordinated approach to both external and internal communications, which will include Strider and all forms of electronic media.	By ensuring that our core communications are integrated between Strider and on-line media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and e-mail, to provide a consistent message.	<p>To commence integration by December 2020.</p> <p>By December 2020.</p>	<p><u>Communications and Publicity Officer</u> Strider Editor LG Officer Membership Officer</p>

	<p>To explore new ways of working and communicating within NEC and between NEC and local groups.</p> <p>To track new membership applications in order to measure the effectiveness of external communications.</p>	<p>To put measures in place to monitor by June 2021.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	
<p>1h. To actively promote a sense of community by assisting physical and mental health wellbeing by encouraging participation in the range of activities that the LDWA provides.</p>	<p>By reaching out with our communications to those who may be isolated or lacking in confidence.</p> <p>By ensuring a sense of community within our groups that helps with mental wellbeing and inclusion, as well as providing opportunities for physical exercise. This will include reaching out to members and potential members with social media, soft communications and offering support to those attending their first walk.</p>	<p>For NEC to agree a strategy by December 2020 and agree appropriate timescales for delivery.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>Communications and Publicity Officer</u> Environment Officer Membership Officer</p>

	To track new membership applications in order to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives.		
1i. To build an environmentally sustainable association by ensuring environmental matters are critical considerations for organisational matters as well as the running of social and challenge walks.	<p>To implement an education and awareness programme amongst the NEC, Local Groups and members. This will be in the form of communications, guidance notes and facilitating training programmes.</p> <p>The Environment Office to hold the NEC to account on environmental matters.</p> <p>To encourage the adoption of similar environmental considerations to suppliers, partners and peers.</p>	<p>To commence publishing material immediately and to raise the profile of environmental matters across the membership.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>Environment Officer</u> Communications and Publicity Officer</p>

Key Area 2 Volunteers

To recruit, retain, reward and develop volunteers within the LDWA in order to recognise the value of individual members and their contribution to the association.

What	How	When	Who (Lead underlined)
<p>2a To develop and implement a volunteer strategy.</p>	<p>Creating a working party to prepare the delivery of a volunteer strategy for approval by the NEC.</p>	<p>Commence activity for implementation early 2021.</p> <p>Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.</p>	<p><u>LG Officer</u> Environment Officer</p>
<p>2b. To support and develop the effectiveness of local groups.</p>	<p>By publishing training materials in the toolkit to help our volunteers.</p> <p>By encouraging increased communication between groups.</p> <p>By exploring new ways of communicating with Local Group Officers.</p> <p>Review alternative and additional ways of connecting with the membership e.g.</p>	<p>To recommend to NEC further enhancements to the toolkit by December 2020.</p> <p>To commence immediately.</p> <p>At Local Group Reps Weekend 2020.</p> <p>Offer a minimum of 1 virtual event per year.</p> <p>Ongoing development of podcasts etc as part of the</p>	<p><u>LG Officer</u> Communications and Publicity Officer IT Officer</p>

	virtual events, podcasts, training videos, etc.	enhancement of the Toolkit and promoted through Social Media. Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.	
2c. To recognise the contribution and commitment of LDWA member volunteers and supporters.	To review and enhance the existing reward and recognition system. Investigate how the LDWA can recognise other key walking achievements.	To fully implement an effective system by August 2021. Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.	<u>General Secretary</u> LG Officer

Key Area 3 Strategic Development

To identify and deliver initiatives for the benefit of the LDWA.

What	How	When	Who (Lead underlined)
3a. To purchase a modern website and electronic operating system that will enable and enhance the day to day operating structures and activities of the LDWA and its members.	By establishing a working group that will specify a website and manage the project to develop and deploy the website to cost, specification and agreed timescales.	IT Officer to report at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.	<u>IT Officer</u> Treasurer Chair LDP Officer (all NEC members to have input)
3b. To build a development budget for the new website and future LDWA initiatives.	By generating income in the form of bequests, donations, entry fee levies, national events, a percentage of the membership fee, commercial activities and any other revenue streams. By identifying a future percentage of the membership fee to be set aside for future LDWA initiatives.	Ongoing. Reports at quarterly NEC meetings and annually (October) for the AGM.	<u>Chair</u> Environment Officer Treasurer
3c. To review the current National Executive	By creating a working group with the option of an	Chair to create a working group and commence the	<u>Chair</u>

<p>Committee roles to explore more effective and efficient ways of working.</p>	<p>independent element to the National Executive Committee to review their roles.</p> <p>For the terms of reference, including the scope to be documented and agreed by the NEC</p>	<p>review by June 2021. Final deadline for the report to NEC by June 2022.</p>	
<p>3d. To work with local groups to explore the current local group structure in order to strengthen their future viability.</p>	<p>By creating a working group with the option of an independent element to explore the current local group structure and geographical boundaries and recommend enhancements to the National Executive Committee.</p>	<p>Chair/LG Officer to create a working group and commence the review by June 2022. Final deadline for review completion by June 2023</p>	<p><u>Chair</u> <u>LG Officer</u></p>

Appendix A – COVID-19

Introduction

The NEC is acutely aware that the impact of COVID-19 on volunteers, local groups and members of the LDWA is substantial. The COVID-19 sub-committee has been set up to try, where possible, to provide clear guidance on how the association is taking steps to get back to normal. It is acknowledged that the return to 'normal' might be over an extensive period of time and potentially we may have to define the new 'normal'.

Therefore, the NEC felt it critical to add an appendix to the business plan in order to detail what activity is being planned with specific reference to COVID-19 issues the association is facing. There are, in conjunction with the challenges, opportunities for new ways of working and engaging with existing members, along with the possibility of inspiring and promoting the LDWA to new members.

The sub-committee have identified three areas of concern:

- (i) Social walks and challenge walks;
- (ii) Loss of members; and
- (iii) Committees & AGMs (to also include NEC and Local Groups).

This appendix will set out how the sub-committee is looking to resolve these concerns and deliver on some new positive initiatives.

Social Walks and Challenge Events

Social walks and challenge events are a key LDWA activity organised through the 43 local groups. Due to the Government guidelines and concerns over the spread of COVID-19, local groups cannot currently organise social walks and challenge events in the same way they did before.

The sub-committee will continue to closely monitor government and regional announcements. All communications and any re-introduction to social walks and challenge events will be in line with government advice, whilst taking all aspects of members and event participants safety into account. There will also need to be a focus on ensuring that we manage our reputation by considering the areas in which LDWA walks take place.

Loss of Members

In light of a reduced walking programme, members might decide not to re-join the LDWA for 2021 and new members might not be attracted. The sub-committee is

actively monitoring membership volumes, although it is not known to what extent numbers will change until the annual renewal in January 2021.

The sub-committee is conscious that the LDWA needs to be pro-active in developing new initiatives that will retain and attract members. The NEC have already created virtual projects, which have inspired members and reinforced the sense of community. The NEC will continue to operate similar projects to ensure existing members feel engaged and that there is something new and exciting for potential members.

The sub-committee is also exploring how to utilise our existing assets, such as the long-distance paths database and other membership benefits. A specific project can run to engage members and to encourage the use of the database in ways that we may not have done before.

Groups also have an opportunity to engage with their members in different ways: by offering slightly shorter walks to encourage new people to give us a try, through increasing the use of social media or in a different manner, perhaps, take a night hike, a walk with a pub meal, a walk that covers some historic sites or a walk where someone with photography expertise is able to give helpful tips. Every group can come up with and develop their own local plan as the COVID-19 rules evolve.

Committees & AGMs

Due to restrictions on travel in some parts of the United Kingdom, social distancing measures, a reduced public transportation network and various other rationale will prevent full attendance of representatives at NEC and local group committee meetings. Annual General Meetings for the LDWA and its local groups must take place in order to comply with the requirements of their constitutions. Due to the reasons above this may not be feasible in its traditional format. The sub-committee has already adopted the use of video conferencing for NEC meetings, whilst it is also exploring options around the provision of support and guidance for local groups to enable local group meetings to take place.

Although there may come a time when meetings can take place normally, COVID-19 has meant that more people are now confident using video conferencing technology. This presents new opportunities for bringing members into local meetings or national events, such as the groups' weekend and the national AGM. This might then engage more people, those, for instance, who could previously have been excluded for accessibility, confidence or personal reasons. The sub-committee is also exploring ways in which events can take place with an expanded social element, potentially connecting us more closely to the online community.