

Minutes of the First Annual General Meeting

of Herefordshire Walking

Wednesday, 10th September, 2014 at 7.00pm

Castle Green Pavilion, Castle Green Hereford

Present: Philip Williams, Christine Williams, Steve Dennis, Sue Dennis, Philip Bauer, Marika Kovacs, Nic Howes, Arthur Lee, Lucinda James, Liz Hill, John Wride, Mary Howcroft, Roger Lowery, John Winterfeld, Will Steele, Teresa Nahajski, Lisa Richardson

Apologies: Rachel Hicks, Rex Eckley, Heather Hurley, Ian Foster, Dennis Downey, Chris & Gill James, John Dawson, David Hawkins, Les Lumsdon, Mike Thompson, Laurie Lowe, Vince Playdon, Sarah Sawyer, Christine Hope, Jenny Williams.

Arthur Lee welcomed all to the meeting & read out the apologies, all of whom sent their sincere good wishes for Hereford Walking and their intention to continue working with the Herefordshire Walking Festival in the future. He had not expected to be chairing a 'wash-up' meeting for the 13th Walking Festival until the Walking with Offa Project came to the rescue with the funding.

Walking with Offa: Lucinda James, Walking with Offa Co-ordinator, explained this unique cross-border project, bringing together strategic rural development & tourism bodies along the English-Welsh border to promote walking and sustainable tourism and transport along either side of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. She then showed a short film highlighting some of the initiatives which had benefitted from the funding.

Meet the Team: Arthur introduced the Steering Group of the small social enterprise, Herefordshire Walking, which was formed to organise the Herefordshire Walking Festival and to work for the benefit of walking in all its aspects in Herefordshire and adjoining counties as set out in the constitution. Lisa Richardson acted as Secretary/Treasurer & Festival Organiser, Liz Hill handled Facebook, Twitter and all things promotional. Lucinda looked after the funding and Arthur chaired the group. Vince Playdon of Balfour Beatty was the footpath representative but his area of work was no longer relevant & Will Steel was kindly attending the meeting in his stead. Arthur then introduced Steve Dennis, who had come forward at the end of the Walking Festival and had offered to provide funding of £5,000 for the next five years to ensure its continuance.

Steve explained that he had come to Herefordshire as a Londoner, with his profession of tree surgery providing the halfway house between town and country. He had discovered Herefordshire through the Walking Festival, Herefordshire Council's archaeological walks and his own explorations. The Festival leaders created walks featuring an aspect of Herefordshire seen through their own area of expertise or local knowledge which was an invaluable experience in discovering the county. He would like his funding to form the basis for attracting other sources of income and to be able to expand and promote the festival into a successful future.

Arthur and the meeting expressed their warmest appreciation of his generosity.

Festival Report: The meeting pack contained the final ticket sales, the analysis of the walk feedback forms returned & statistics drawn from the database. Ticket sales of 335 adults & 6 children covered half of the 679 walk places available & were well distributed between the walks. Four walks were fully booked & the weather had been excellent. Because of the uncertainty, the mailout and

website were very late. We did suffer from the lack of a 'walk-in' presence in Hereford & particularly from the ability to take credit cards over the phone plus the doubt in the mind of the regular Festival walkers as to whether the Festival was going ahead. On the 151 walk feedback forms received, 71 had heard about the festival on receipt of the brochure, 26 picked it up through the internet/social media, 21 via friends or family. Only 7 had responded to newspaper advertising & 3 of those had also received the brochure.

With the sponsorship offered, there was now a firm base to plan ahead. This would mean that the timetable could revert to previous years, with the brochure ready for distribution at the end of January and with all walks up on the website by then, at the time when people were planning their holidays for the coming year. Walk leaders and organisations could put together their ideas with certainty and perhaps the sponsorship could trigger match-funding for further help in building the festival ultimately into a self-sustainable event. Lisa was looking for walks to be in by the beginning to mid-December, to go to the printer after the Christmas break, packed & out by the end of January.

Budget Report: All the suppliers had given very special deals on brochure, design & the minimal amount was spent on advertising. The brochure cost £1,090 & postage was £1,578.30 but it was our major advertising tool & Ross Walking Festival had given £100 to circulate their brochure with the mail-out. The website cost £180 but we received £100 from advertising on the site and it generated £1,086.50 of ticket sales for a commission of £50.96. Both these areas of finance should be developed for 2015. With some funding from the last Herefordshire 'Leader', the Walking with Offa project & sponsorship from Herefordshire Ramblers, the Festival had come in within budget. There was a small surplus to carry forward but not enough to cover a festival in 2015.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by John Wride, seconded by Roger Lowrey, carried unanimously.

Constitution: The constitution had been previously circulated to all present but there had been some subsequent amendments, the most important of which was that membership is automatic for walk leaders and backmarkers in that year's Walking Festival.

Adoption of the revised constitution was proposed by Philip Williams, seconded by Nic Howes and carried unanimously.

Election of Committee: No-one coming forward for the Chairmanship or other officers or to join the committee, the existing members were elected en bloc as follows:

Chair: Arthur Lee

Members: Liz Hill & Lucinda James

Secretary/Treasurer: Lisa Richardson

It was intended to co-opt Steve Dennis onto the Committee for the coming year.

From the Floor: It was suggested & agreed that a suitable Patron / President should be found for Herefordshire Walking.

Date of the next Annual General Meeting: to be held within five weeks of 30th September 2015, exact date to be advised.