

Wellington Walkers are Welcome

Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 3 November 2021 at 7 pm via zoom

Present: Eve Clevenger, Jean Escott, Pamela Hill, Chris Jay, Sheila Jones, Julie Pierce, Malcolm Skelton, Naomi Wrighton, Amanda Graham, Diane Hambleton, Paul Kalinauckas, Dave Staniforth.

1, Apologies: Bob Coalbran, Alan Hill.

2, Minutes of 2020 AGM: Accepted as an accurate record.

3, Matters Arising: Slow Ways project to be discussed on 30 November at next committee meeting.

4, Chair's Report: Eve welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to her report which had been circulated in advance. She celebrated the achievements of the past year: despite the impact of Covid 19, the group had continued to offer a programme of led walks once restrictions were lifted, attend to path maintenance and organise a successful Walking Festival of 25 events. She thanked all members of the Committee individually for their specific contributions.

Julie endorsed Eve's comments, thanking all for their hard work and making particular mention of Bob's wealth of knowledge.

5, Treasurer's Report: The financial statement for the year to 31 March 2021 had been circulated in advance by Sheila, and audited and approved by Chas Kay. This AGM has been delayed to November due to the pandemic but we will plan for the next AGM to be held in June/July 2022. The balance on 31 March was £555.40, an increase of £197.97 on the previous year end.

6, Secretary's Report: Naomi's detailed overview of the past year's activities & achievements had been forwarded in advance: she commented on the increased membership (now 142) & listed the many events the group has organised, including the 10th Walking Festival in September, the regular Sunday walks when restrictions allowed & themed outings in conjunction with National Tree Week, Hope House Hospice charity hike & ODP's 50th anniversary. Naomi has numerous links with other local groups, similarly involved in walking & the preservation of the environment, as well as her commitment to regional & national issues in WAW. Having recently attended the annual get-together in Kington, she reminded the meeting that this will be held in Alton, Hants., in 2022.

7, Footpath Secretary's Report: Bob had sent his comprehensive resume of his activities prior to the meeting. He had mentioned his wish to see through his involvement with FOWS & the Wellington Ways project to its conclusion in March 2022. In addition to commenting on planning applications & traffic management, he has reviewed the new online DM to identify inconsistencies & highlighted the poor state of the path network to the west of the Wrekin with a view to add this area to the Wellington 360 range. Bob has continued to litter pick various locations in the area and maintain his links with several local organisations.

Eve thanked the absent Bob on behalf of all the Committee for all his hard work and attention to significant intricate tasks: "We'll miss him".

8, Path Maintenance Group Organiser's Report: Malcolm had forwarded his detailed report before the meeting. He referred to the lost time during the lockdowns. He thanked all who had helped to keep the local paths open and mentioned the exploration of the ROWs to the west of the Wrekin. WTC has an improved budget for 2022 which should benefit the area. Some issues are addressed efficiently, others less so. The expenditure on equipment has been minimal. Eve thanked Malcolm for his organisation & diligence in maintaining the tools.

9, Publicity Secretary's Report: Jean had provided a succinct account of the many press releases she had sent to the Shropshire Star and Radio Shropshire during the year. She has developed a good contact at the Shropshire Star and given 4 interviews on the local radio station. The Wrekin News has not been published of late. The Wellington Magazine is now produced by WTC & has featured our activities. Naomi & Eve thanked Jean for improving the profile of the group.

10, Election of Officers: Eve, Naomi, Sheila, Malcolm, Jean, Pam and Chris indicated their willingness to continue in their respective roles on the Committee. The following were therefore proposed, seconded and approved en bloc:

Eve (Chair)
Naomi (Secretary)
Sheila (Treasurer)
Malcolm (PMG Organiser)
Jean (Publicity Secretary)
Pam (Minutes Secretary)
Chris

As Bob had already expressed his intention to step down as Footpath Secretary, Naomi proposed Malcolm to assume his role & this was seconded by Chris. Malcolm accepted, indicating that he is happy to deal with issues involving the Council. Julie, our WTC Representative, volunteered to report on matters relating to FOWS and FOBP as well as championing footpath issues with WTC. Congratulations, Malcolm.

Eve invited further nominations to the Committee, emphasising that enthusiasm for walking was the main quality required. There were no volunteers. However, Amanda stated that she would be willing to take on specific tasks/back marking; her professional demands currently limit her capacity to take on more.

11, AOB: Reference was made to other walking opportunities in Wellington which have been initiated recently.

Eve formally closed the AGM at 8.04 pm.

12, Date of next committee meeting: Tuesday 30 November at 2 pm (tbc) via zoom.

There then followed informal discussion on various topics including ideas for publicising the group's activities, liaising with other community initiatives and increasing the diversity of participants.