

Wellington Walkers are Welcome

Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 29th October 2020 at 7 pm via zoom

Present: Eve Clevenger, Bob Coalbran, Jean Escott, Pamela Hill, Chris Jay, Sheila Jones, Julie Pierce, Malcolm Skelton, Naomi Wrighton. All introduced themselves and outlined their role.

1, Apologies: Dorothy Roberts.

2, Minutes of 2019 AGM: Accepted as an accurate record.

3, Matters arising: None.

4, Chair's Report: Eve's report had been received in advance. She expressed her thanks to all members of the committee for their hard work during the past year. Special mention was made of Bob's Mayor's Award, recently received for his work over many years in promoting the town, firstly for Walkers are Welcome and latterly also for other groups, particularly the Friends of Wellington Station (FOWS). Eve welcomed Julie Pierce, Councillor for Park Ward, to the Committee as the WTC link, replacing Dorothy Roberts whose vision it was ten years ago to promote Wellington as a WAW town. Eve reaffirmed her passion about people taking exercise and the great opportunities for this in our locality.

5, Treasurer's Report: The financial statement for the year to March 2020, audited by Chas Kay, had been provided in advance. Sheila updated the meeting that the current balance stands at £601. We have applied for a grant of £300 from WTC. It is expected that this will be awarded later in the year. Julie will check the situation.

6, Secretary's Report: Naomi's full report had been received prior to the meeting. Membership of the group is presently 129, including 8 patrons. Julie was urged to register her membership. Special reference was made to the report on September's Walking Festival and the acknowledgement from the Mayor for the group's endeavour during the difficulties caused by the pandemic. It was noted that we plan to put on a walk at Dothill LNR on 6 December as part of National Tree Week. The LNR has been gifted 150 oak saplings by Extinction Rebellion. Our 10th Walking Festival is planned for September 2021 when a celebration is hoped. Naomi will attend the annual National Get Together of WAW in Kington in October 2021.

7, Footpath Secretary's Report: Bob spoke to his report, referring to the activities of the FOWS, the CCIF bid and the annual community event on 13 November. While FOWS had been in a state of limbo recently, he confirmed that in the past 2 weeks water taps had been installed at the station. He raised his disquiet about the demise of the Promotions & Liaisons Group and the impact on voluntary groups. Julie stated that the new Committee is forming. Bob is also involved with the Friends of the Wrekin. The group is aiming to produce a newsletter shortly. The winter closure of the Halfway House was noted.

8, Path Maintenance Group Organiser's Report: Malcolm had provided a comprehensive report in advance, detailing a total of 240 person hours of activity, across many locations in the town. Increased footfall has helped keep paths passable. Reference was made to the current difficulties relating to car sharing and parking limits because of coronavirus guidance. We are now in the season of fallen trees and litter picking. Malcolm clarified for Julie's benefit that work parties are the first and third Thursdays as a norm and managed on an ad hoc basis.

9, Publicity Secretary's Report: Jean provided a verbal account of her work in promoting the group's activities, including the Walking Festival, with the Shropshire Star and Wrekin News. The progress with Radio Shropshire has depended on what topics are in favour at the time. Julie reminded the meeting that the magazine This is our Wellington is due to be delivered to every household in the town and Caroline and Paola at WTC are the contacts for our news stories.

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

Eve Clevenger (Chair)

Naomi Wrighton (Secretary)

Sheila Jones (Treasurer)

Bob Coalbran (Footpath Secretary)

Malcolm Skelton (Path Maintenance Group Organiser)

Jean Escott (Publicity Secretary)

Pam was proposed by Julie and seconded by Sheila as Minutes Secretary to assist Naomi with some routine tasks. This was agreed by the meeting.

Chris Jay was welcomed as a new member on the Committee, as was Julie Pierce who has assumed Dorothy's role as the link to WTC.

June Amos, Toni Carver and Brian Herring had advised the Committee that they would be stepping down. Their contribution to the group was acknowledged and thanks formally recorded..

11, AOB:

Naomi drew attention to an initiative by Kirkby Stephen WAW to utilise the promotional capacity of local bus shelters. Naomi will seek further information and Julie will make enquiries with WTC about the potential here to adopt a similar strategy.

Malcolm raised the Slow Ways national project to produce safe pedestrian routes between towns. The consensus was for the group to become involved. Naomi will register WWAW's interest.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 25 November at 7.30 pm via zoom.

Agenda items to include the bus shelter initiative and the recent Walking Festival.