



Northumbria Area AGM

3rd February, 2024 at 14.00

St Nicholas Church Hall, Gosforth

Present:

Ian Turnbull Derwentside
Sue Keeton Chester le Street
Nuala Wright Hexham
Rob Hutchinson Sunderland Walking Club
Malcolm McVey Tyneside
Mick Bendall Tyneside
Laura Brosnan Tyneside
Kenneth Wright Tyneside
Steve Edwards Ponteland
Peter Byrne Tyneside
Michael Manwell Tyneside
Bill Gallon Gateshead
Roger Morris Hexham
Judith Taylor Tyneside

Vicky Ludbrook Morpeth
Wendy Maxted Tyneside
Joan Dodds Sunderland
Julia Forster Hexham
Brian Kram Tyneside
Julie Glover Tyneside
Eileen Wiltshire Tyneside
Julie Brown Short Circuits
Charlie Brown Short Circuits
Sue Lawson Tyneside
Lynne Moores Short Circuits
Philip Moores Short Circuits
Richard Fletcher Durham
Ros Fane Central Office

1. **Introduction and welcome:** Richard Fletcher, Chair of Northumbria Area welcomed members attending.
2. **Apologies:** received from Josie McChrystal, Gill Dallow, Neil Allender, David Crowe, David Young.
3. **The Minutes** of the 84th Annual General Meeting were accepted.
4. There were no matters arising.
5. **The Annual Report** was compiled and would be sent out by email.
6. **Officers' Reports**

Treasurer's Report:

- The audited accounts were presented. There was a planned deficit of £1186.09 in line with reducing a funding surplus. The meeting adopted the accounts.
- The understanding is that the current auditor will continue next year.

Access Report:

- The last stretch of the England Coast Path through Northumberland has been opened. To be renamed King Charles III Way. Some disappointing stretches depart from the coast where conservation issues have had priority.
- The hope is that the entire route through England will be open by the end of this year.
- Storm damage has closed footpaths with a projected 5 year delay in reopening all routes. Ash die-back is also causing problems.
- It was also reported that rural crime has caused gates to be locked which places obstacles for walkers on RoWs. Also that Northumberland plans to maintain its current budget for RoWs.

Website Report:

- Continuing difficulties in editing the new site makes the inclusion of any information other than that of walks to be impossible.
- A Resolution was called for to require action to make the site more accessible.

7. Election of Officers:

- Chair: Richard Fletcher to continue as Chair. Proposed S Edwards Seconded B Gallon
- Treasurer: Peter Byrne to replace Steve Edwards as Treasurer. Proposed S. Edwards, seconded M. Manwell
- Secretary: Wendy Maxted willing to continue for another year but will not be available until Easter. If someone offers to take over the role, Wendy will step down immediately.
- Minutes: J. Taylor will continue.
- RoW: N. Allender will continue.
- Access: N. Wright will continue.
- Website: T. Royston will continue.
- Annual Report: David Crowe will continue.
- Independent members: Bill Gallon and David Crowe

The meeting approved all of the above appointments.

Steve Edwards was thanked for his work as Treasurer.

The desirability of having a Countryside Secretary and a Media/Publicity Secretary was stated. It was agreed that the job descriptions would be consulted and discussed at the next AC meeting.

8 AOB

- Wendy Maxted requested that any changes of roles within groups should be reported to her in order to keep contacts up to date.
- Display boards will be housed in Gosforth temporarily. Decisions need to be taken about whether or not to keep them.
- The Heritage Way route is well used and comments are favourable. RoW Officers have been very helpful.
- Map library. This resource of 336 maps is currently held by M. McVey. It is used but infrequently. Future of the resource could be either that one custodian is willing to take it on or that the maps could be given away or that they could be donated to another map library. Suggested outlets from the floor were the FitzHugh library of maps at Middleton in Teesdale or Oxfam in Durham. W. Maxted offered to take them.
- Training was available for anyone willing to assist visually impaired walkers. It was thought that this should not be the responsibility of walks leaders and other issues needed to be considered such as getting to and from the start point of the walk when public transport may not be available. Anyone interested could contact W. Maxted who would pass on the information about training.

Ros Fane from Central Office spoke of the new 10 year Strategic Plan which had been presented and approved at an Extraordinary General Meeting in the Autumn of 2023. This plan aimed to reflect changes in society and funding and to focus on the health and well-being of people who have least access to outdoor activities. The importance of Areas and Groups in delivering the envisaged measures was recognised. In questions following the talk, it was pointed out that disadvantaged communities would find the cost of membership, kit and transport unaffordable. There was no real answer to this problem but Ros noted the remarks.

9 Next AGM venue: As the list of groups hosting meetings is not available at present owing to the inaccessible website, it was not possible to determine which group would host the next meeting. It is hoped to be able to have this information before long.

The meeting closed at 15.50