

Minutes of the Committee Meeting Wed 24 January 2018

Present: Bernard Parker (BP); Val Rose (VR); Celia Broom (CB); Dorothy Webley (DW); Eric Evans (EE); Keith Probert (KP); Bob Ward (BW)); Paddy Jewry (PJ); Maggie Cahm (MC); Julian Fisher (JF); Tessa Smith (TS)

- **Welcome and apologies**

Apologies received from Steve Wise (SW)

BP welcomed Bob Ward to the committee and thanked him for taking up the post.

- **Minutes of the Committee meeting 11/10/17 and Matters Arising**

KP explained that the Maddacombe Bridge matter was not going to be progressed until Ros Mills returns.

BP had forwarded his recent letter to Devon County Council to the committee and expressed his frustration and annoyance at the discourtesy shown by a lack of response. *Once again, this issue will be taken forward to the next meeting.*

VR asked if the JMHT monitoring was to be reduced from quarterly to three times a year and this was confirmed by KP

The fundraising for the JMHT as mentioned in the minutes page 3 item (iv) was not considered to be necessary at this stage as the money was not being spent on Deer Park.

KP raised the matter of the Watcombe Beach car park. CB reported that this will remain open so we are free to use this as a start for walks as before.

- **Holiday 2018**

The Isle of Man holiday is not proving to be as popular as previous holidays and to date 29 people have committed to participating with another person hoping to find a share. MC explained that if the numbers were reduced there would need to be an increase of around £25 per person.

The matter was discussed at length and a straw poll taken to assess readiness to accept the increase in cost. While the majority were prepared to pay more, there were some who had reservations about this.

A decision was made to adhere to the already extended cut-off date which is 31st January, to try a last call for support, including an email to group members. If the additional 10 were not forthcoming it was accepted that it may be necessary to cancel the trip. It was also considered important to be fair to the hotel on the Isle of Man who would need ample time to secure bookings for that week.

ACTION POINTS: MC/BP to raise at the walk the following day stating the position. TS to send an email from MC to group members. A decision taken after 31 January 2018

- **Holiday 2019**

CB had sent round an email detailing the proposal from Steven Kounis for a holiday to Greece 10-17 May 2019. The prices given were exclusive of flights and CB had asked husband Ian to do some research. CB expressed some doubt as to whether sufficient members would support this holiday which would be more expensive than our usual holiday weeks, though still less expensive than a Ramblers Worldwide package. BP pressed for a firmer figure and CB estimated £800 pp for those in a double room and £890 for singles. This price would include flight from Bristol plus return coach from Torbay.

TS raised the question of who would be lead organizer.

Other possible destinations for 2019 were discussed: The Lake District was proposed by EE; MC favoured a return to Brittany which had proved to be popular for many years; BW mentioned Luxembourg. Several offers to help with arrangements were made.

ACTION POINT: by April meeting we need firm offers from anyone willing to organise a holiday, destination and a guide price so a decision can be made in good time.

- **Grading walks**

EE outlined his reservations about the grading of walks. The obligation to grade in Walksfinder was acknowledged. SW's suggestions were also considered.

After a discussion, BP referred to a wording he had seen in Austria:

The classification of the different grades of walks difficulty are subjective and can change from person to person.

It was felt that this encapsulated all the reservations we shared about the grading of walks.

JF reiterated his view that it was unfair to expect the Walks Coordinator to take on the responsibility for attributing a grade to a walk that has been reced by another, viz the walk leader, and therefore leaders should be apprised of the standardizing, crude as it may be, on the national website.

Furthermore, it was felt that leaders could be encouraged to add a brief description of their walk to indicate any particular challenge eg, *many stiles; several steep ascents/descents*. Some are already doing this but this good practice could be more widely adopted.

ACTION POINT: EE to edit the walk leaders' form to encourage this refinement. The standardizing adopted on the national site also to be clarified for leaders.

- **Use of postcodes**

All agreed that the usefulness, or not, of postcodes in rural areas, is questionable. EE accepted responsibility for recent confusion stemming from post codes on the walks programme. This was due to his completion of a 'mandatory field' which he now realises can simply be left as 'not applicable'. It was felt that it is up to walks leaders to decide on the usefulness of a post code though EE has the discretion to omit where he feels it may lead to confusion.

- **Footpath Officer: Sladnor Park**

Following a phone call from a lady living in or near Maidencombe, KP and then also BW, had looked into the development at Sladnor Park. Having visited the area, BW could see no 'loss of amenity'. Both KP and BP felt we would be 'hard pressed to genuinely raise any objection.

AP: KP to contact the party who raised the concern to convey our decision.

- **Communications: use of website, Facebook (FB), group mailings**

Neither JF nor TS felt they could be responsible for everything on the website. Admin access was clarified and members of the committee are reminded to let one of the four have any updates.

APs: PJ to ask SW if he can keep the social events up to date

JMHT sub committee to review the relevant section for updating

JF to effect changes to accommodate the Trail routes supplied by Alan R

BP and TS had queried the noticeable increase in Facebook requests for membership. JF made the case for routine acceptance as the FB page was monitored by himself, BP and TS and any unwanted commercial intrusion was swiftly and easily dealt with. JF's recent post also makes it clear that the FB page is for ramblers.

- **AGM 2018**

BP invited members of the committee to comment on the AGM 2017 and referred to some opinions conveyed on walks.

EE felt the committee standing at the front had felt awkward and did not elicit a fluid interaction as intended. KP also felt we had failed to engage the audience sufficiently for this interaction. Tactics for improving this were discussed and a survey suggested. While the length was seen generally as an improvement, there was still the matter of people at the back being unable to hear.

JF felt George Coles' comment on the professionalism of the meeting was worth heeding since he attended many AGMs in Devon Area.

JF felt Alan R's anecdotal contribution had been much enjoyed. TS referred to her paper circulated earlier which suggested the use of similar case studies or 'stories' to lend colour to the AGM

ACTION POINTS: The committee resolved to make use of the PA system in future.

ALL to think out a possible strategy to stimulate engagement from the audience.

APRIL MEETING: decisions on format to be made

- **AOB**

- (i) **Social events:**

PJ and VR confirmed the date for the Canoe event as 28 September 2018

Steve Rose and Trish W had declared themselves prepared to repeat the First Aid day and PJ volunteered her help.

The 2018 Christmas lunch was booked for 7 December. Views on the lunch versus dinner format had been sought and the votes were more largely in favour of a lunch. PJ felt a lunch for one more year was right to appease the many who had been disappointed at being unable to get a place at the 2017 lunch. It was suggested that views on the event for 2019 could be sought at the AGM as part of the drive for some participation.

ACTION POINT: PJ to ask SW to update the social events page on the website

- (ii) **Calendar dates:**

Coleridge Way dates so far are Sun 29 April for the first leg with Sun 24 June earmarked for the second leg as the annual JM excursion. A third autumn date was seen as achievable but TS would await the outcome of the IOM Holiday before making any firm plans for October.

VR clarified that she wanted to ask for donations for Children in Need as part of the Big Ramble but that this would happen on a scheduled walk rather than being a dedicated event. This is also in October.

CB reminded committee that the SWCP routinely have a drive for funds in October by way of the SWCP Challenge. In 2017 BP has successfully mounted an additional walk raising funds but for 2018 it was felt it could comprise a normally scheduled Sunday walk, albeit along the Coast Path.

KP asked if committee wanted to follow through with the annual JMHT walk and this was unanimously supported as the best way to highlight our Trail. KP kindly agreed to lead though he invited others to offer!

PJ mentioned the offer from the AONB officer to lead a walk in the South Hams and this was readily approved as another 'guest leader' type walk which have been enjoyed in the past when the Dartmoor Rangers lead walks.

BP raised the idea of a Templer Way walk in memory of Les and discussions centred on the logistics. DW suggested it might be unwise to rely totally on the Countrybus in case there were many walkers and came up with a plan to have a coach from Newton Abbot, where walkers would normally assemble for the Countrybus, taking walkers to Haytor only. Getting back from Teignmouth, or wherever walkers dropped off, would be up to the individual. BP argued for a coach from Paignton though there was less support for this.

Tentative dates were put forward by BP who had studied the tide tables and Saturday 5 May was selected.

APs: DW and MC to explore the coach issue and get costings.

BP to contact Les' daughter to see if she would like to lead.

EE to note all of these calendar dates and consider whether or not to organize a walk for Sunday 6 May following the Les Grant Memorial walk on the Saturday.

(iii) Incident Form

EE mentioned the matter of a recent incident and thanked BW for providing picture evidence. TS had had the form returned from Central as no witness had been cited. There had in fact been no witness at the scene but VR offered to act as 'witness to the aftermath' to satisfy requirements!

AP: TS to edit and return the form

(iv) Road improvements

KP updated committee on developments. He reminded committee that Keith Rennells' role was to look at improvements needed on the area termed 'the Kingswear peninsula'. Two matters had been progressed on to the plan which will help the JMHT:

- A better crossing at Churston Cross from Alston Lane through an old orchard on the Lupton Estate. This improvement will incur costs and it is possible we may be approached for a contribution.
- The Kennels Road crossing, a more hazardous spot. This improvement has potentially a longer negotiation time and is likely to be progressed once Alexis Higgins returns from maternity leave in March.

SDR have been asked to write a letter of support via the AONB team to Nicky Bailey at Follaton House.

AP: BP and KP to collaborate and send the requested letter of support.

- **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 11 April 2018 in the Morning Room at The Redcliffe Hotel, Paignton, 6.30 for 7pm

