

# MFCG Spring Newsletter

April 2022

MANX FOOTPATHS  
Conservation GROUP



*Affiliated to The Ramblers*

Welcome to the spring newsletter.

A very quick introduction. My name is Alistair Lothian and I have been a member of MFCG for a little over two years now.

Thank you for voting me in as your new Chairman. I will endeavour to do as good a job as I can with the help and guidance from the committee and indeed from anyone happy to give advice.

I mainly walk on Tuesdays, Thursdays (though less frequent recently) and Saturdays and I am now also walking on Debbie Broome's Sunday walks which are a wee bit more challenging but great fun.

As I am sure you are all aware Ken Harding has kindly organised a trip to Northumberland in May. There are still two places available so please contact Ken if you are now free to go. If the walks are successful Ken will organise further walks off island for us all.

Over the years, as summarised in the AGM minutes, many changes have occurred for the betterment of the MFCG. Your committee is committed to keeping up to date with all legal aspects of walking and liaising regularly with the DOI (or whichever department has responsibility for the footpaths) so we can all enjoy walking on the IOM. Indeed, the reduction in repair and maintenance budget mentioned by David Leiserach seems very short sighted as many visitors come across to walk, cycle and use the greenways.

Your committee has a number of projects on the go:

- 1.Sponsoring a Trig Point.
- 2.Linking walks to encompass ancient Manx Traditions.
- 3.Updating the MFCG walking books

1. Sponsoring a Trig Point. In the 1980s MFCG sponsored the Trig on Peel Hill. The project is to resurrect the Sponsorship. Agreement from the appropriate department has still to take place. If successful we will require volunteers to help from time to time in general maintenance of that Trig. The aim is to get agreement to have a plaque defining the MFCG as the sponsors, therefore in a small way helping to promote our walking group.

As the maintenance budget has dwindled such a lot it could be a way for the DOI to raise money to help maintain paths by encouraging large IoM organisations to sponsor other TRIG points?

2. Linking walks to encompass ancient Manx Traditions. I think this is a great idea. When you read the history of the IoM you quickly realise there is more to the IoM than meets the eye. An example is "Rushes for Manannan" on South Barrule on old midsummer's eve.

3. Updating the MFCG walking books. My understanding is that the books were originally written about 20 years ago and were refreshed circa 10 years ago. Lily Publications stocks are dwindling. The committee are now looking at the pros and cons of continuing, re writing or ceasing having the books. The books have been financially successful, contributing positively to our funds, and maybe more importantly have probably helped in raising the profile of the group, and with the lobbying to have paths improved and maintained.

This though is a big project, and we will give great thought before any decision is made.

The most important thing is walking. There are few walking groups that can boast that they organise up to six walks a week, all varied to meet the mixed walking abilities from young to old, fit to less fit. Open to anyone and a great way of meeting people.

Thank you to all walk leaders and thank you to Peter Corkish for pulling together the walk programme. I got badgered, or maybe just encouraged, to take the challenge of planning and leading walks. The thought terrified me in all honesty, but I have thoroughly enjoyed leading walks. Working out new walks takes time. The walks have to be planned. For health and safety they have to be walked then a risk assessment done. All time consuming but can be great fun. The MFCG web site is excellent and set up so that filling in a risk assessment is unbelievably easy. That part takes less than five minutes. The more people that can lead walks the better. It takes the pressure off all the regular walk leaders. Please give it some thought and have a go. There is plenty of free walking software that can be downloaded and used to plan walks. I for example use outdoor active.

The greater number of walk leaders will also increase the variety of walks.

The winter walking programme was very successful and as always, the summer walking schedule will be full of great walks. Enjoy walking and hopefully over time I will get to meet you all.

Alistair