



# Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2024

held at The Fairway Restaurant, Peel Golf Club, Peel

7pm Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

1. **Welcome:**

Chairman Alistair Lothian welcomed 28 members to the meeting.

Committee members present: Alistair Lothian, Louise Whitelegg, Peter Gunn, David Leiserach, Paul de Weerd, Peter Corkish, Paul Castle.

2. **Apologies:** Lesley Parkington, Angela Weston, Geoff Clague, Elaine Spaine, Catriona Livingstone, Denise Eckersley, Barbara Gibson, Janice McGuigan, Dot Winrow, Vanda Murray, Jim Parkington.

3. **To approve the minutes of the previous year's Annual General Meeting held on 21st March 2023.**

Proposer: Paul Sheridan - Seconder: John Radcliffe

Minutes duly approved.

4. **Committee Report:** Alistair Lothian

Dear Members,

Firstly, thank you to all our volunteer walk leaders and co-ordinators and a big welcome to all our new members. We hope you have all been enjoying the winter walks.

We welcome Louise Whitelegg who has been seconded on to the committee as your Membership Secretary and Data Protection Officer. With having a great deal of experience in data protection Louise has been reviewing the systems in place. We wish Gill Smith well with her move back to the UK.

As you know the committee has updated the web site by inputting ready-made routes for you to use when leading a walk. There is now an excess of 80 walks round the island listed. This is a great resource. We could do with more volunteers tracking walks and emailing them to the web site.

If interested in helping please email Alistair Lothian [chair@manxfootpaths.org](mailto:chair@manxfootpaths.org)

Happy Hiker wood carving Peel - The maintenance of securing loose limbs and oiling was done during the summer. The plaques have been removed and we are still waiting for them to be refurbished before we can re-fit them. We aim now to oil the carving twice yearly as an ongoing preservation programme.

The plan to have some of the walking books published by the Club and scanned into the history section of the web site is still on going. Thank you to everyone who have passed on books.

Our annual carol service at St. Luke's went very well. Many thanks to those who read the lessons. A big thank you to Sue and the team at St. Luke's for all their help. A special mention to Rev. Jo Dudley for accompanying the carols on the Organ.

The New Year Lunch was once again very successful with everyone enjoying the delicious carvery and quizzes. Our thanks to the Talk of the Town for making it a special day.

Looking forward we have the annual walk on the 18th of May, designed to bring together those who walk on different days.

This is actually two walks . One short and one a bit longer and then lots of social chat over tea, coffee and cake.

There are other events we are looking into such as a visit to Glen Truan Apiary and a trip to the Calf of Man.

Everything will be added onto the diary on the web site as dates get confirmed.

Best wishes, your committee

March 2024

## 5. To Receive Treasurer's Report: Angela Weston

### Treasurer's Report – Accounts Y/E 31st December 2023

Firstly, apologies for my absence and not being there for my first AGM but family duty calls. It has been an eventful year. Our main priority has been to try and resolve the banking permissions and mandates to reflect the current committee members. Due to the poor service we have encountered with the Isle of Man bank specifically in relation to the amendment of the banking mandates, the committee made the decision to move the Group's banking to the Lloyds Banking Group. In comparison this has been a smooth and relatively easy transition. I am pleased to say we are now up and running with the new bank account and we managed to get this completed in time to receive the 2024 subscriptions. Thank you to all members for taking the time to amend their standing orders etc to the new bank account. It is our intention for 2024 to transfer all the funds currently held with the IOM bank to Lloyds and look to close down the old accounts as soon as it is feasible.

On to the accounts for 2024. There has also been a change to the layout of the account to now incorporate a comparison to the previous years.

#### **Balance Sheet**

Focusing on the position on the bank accounts we can see the total opening balance equates to £19,436 with a closing of £20,666 creating a movement overall all as an increase to the balance of £1,231.

	2023	2022	Movement
Current Account - Lloyds	£585	£0	£585
Current Account - IOM	£5,309	£4,962	£347
Reserve - IOM	£14,772	£14,474	£298
Reserve - Lloyds	£0	£0	£0
Total	£20,666	£19,436	£1,231

This coupled with a movement in the deferred income of £240, Accruals of £30 and prepayment and accrued income of £101 gives us our overall increase in assets of £1,062.

Prepayment and Accrued income relate to £33 of expenses for the 2024 year and £69 of income from Lily publications for the commissions received for the sale of books. Deferred income relates to the subscription income received from members in the bank account in the financial year 2023 that relate subscriptions for 2024. The revenue will be shown in the Income/Expenditure account in 2024. The £30 of accruals relates to a payment for a winter talk held in November for a talk that took place in November.

#### **Moving onto the Income and Expenditure report**

The income is mainly driven from the yearly subscriptions which is currently sets at £10 per annum. We had one member who paid the old £6 which is being rectified for 2024. The current number of members for 2023 was 258 a reduction of 28 from the previous year.

Bank interest increased by £250 on the previous year of £48. This is due to the increase in bank interest rates on the reserve account. In 2024 we will as a committee research the possibility of increasing the potential return whilst ensuring no risk to the funds. Current

Other income £120 relates to commission received from Ramblers for members booking holidays and referencing the Walking group

This brings the total income for the year to £3,209 a reduction on the previous year of £678. Last year included £439 of revenue for the sale of books via Lily Publications compared to £69 for this year and prior years donations totalling £539 included a one off of £240 for assisting another walking group.

## Expenditure

The overall expenditure for 2023 totalled £2,147 an increase of £607 on the previous 12 months.

The majority increase on costs has been driven by the following items

Website costs of £361 has increased by £214 on the prior year. In 2023 there have been a few changes and editing required to the groups' website, i.e. the inclusion of walks and thus an increase in the cost of the service required.

Health and safety costs of £527 include a first aid course attended by 12 of our members totalling £360, plus the addition of 10 new first aid kits for the group.

Training cost for 2023 equated to £180. 4 members of the group attended a Hills skills course whereby 50% of the cost has been covered by the group.

This has resulted in a surplus for the financial year of £1,062.

If there are any question please do not hesitate to ask and if they cannot be answered by the committee, I can always follow up on these upon my return.

Many thanks

Angela Weston

Treasurer

## Independent Financial Examiner: George Sharpe

I have reviewed this report and the attached Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure account and I can confirm they are in accordance with the groups accounting records.

George Sharpe

### **6. To receive and approve the balance sheet and Accounts for the previous financial year:**

Proposer: David Leiserach Seconder: Diane Turner. The Accounts were duly approved.

### **7. To appoint an Auditor or Independent Financial Examiner for ensuing year:**

David Grimshaw was proposed by Paul Castle, seconded by Brian Beattie.

### **8. Membership Secretary's Report:** Louise Whitelegg

Currently we have: 249 members, of which 38 are new members and 5 are lifetime members.

This a decrease of 16 members of the 2023 total of 265.

Changing bank accounts has been somewhat challenging, but issues were quickly resolved.

### **9. To receive Data Protection Officer's report:** Louise Whitelegg **GDPR lead**

MCFG is fully registered with the IOM data controller.

There have been no breaches of Data Protection Laws.

### **10. To receive Safety Officer's report:** Paul de Weerd

As members will know, walking in the countryside can never be completely safe. We strive to make our walks accessible and avoid the worst sections of damaged or decayed paths, but there is always a risk of trips, falls and other harms.

This year we submitted two incident reports to our insurers. However, happily, both incidents resulted in minor injuries only, and nobody was seriously hurt.

My thanks to all the walk leaders who have submitted risk assessments prior to leading walks this year. The rate of completions of risk assessment is close to 100%. My thanks also to the members taking part, who have worked with the walk leaders to keep themselves and their fellow walkers safe.

**11. Footpaths Officer's report:** Paul Castle

In total 96 footpath concerns were reported in 2023. So far in 2024 10 issues have been reported. The Department of Infrastructure have official closure orders affecting 10 paths/unmade roads, and state that these should not be used. 101 incidents reported, 84 acknowledged by DoI and will be looked into. The remainder are not classed as PROW i.e. on private land. The Footpath Officer thanked the members for their submissions and reminded members to report the significant and not the trivial, using where possible, what three words (or grid reference), with the PROW name if known. One good photo is also preferred over numerous.

**PROW Closures:** David Leiserach

159 - Baldhoon to Laxey Glen (including bridge across the Laxey River). Closed until January 2025 – will be extended

268 - Ballahick Farm Lane. Closed until 9<sup>th</sup> August – may be extended.

307 - Ballafesson Closed until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 – may be extended.

423 - Scout Glen Closed until 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 – may be extended.

615 - Steps to old railway lines. Closed until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – may be extended.

638 – Clypse Reservoir to Enemona Road. Closed until 31<sup>st</sup> January – may be extended.

If there is an official closure, please do not use the route.

**12. To fix the annual subscription payable from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025**

The committee suggested that the annual subscription should remain at £10

Proposer: Sue Harvey Seconded: Paul Sheridan

**13. To Elect Brian Beattie as President for the ensuing year:**

Proposer: Phil Kneen Seconded: Peter Gunn

**14. To elect members of the executive committee.**

In 2024 There are two vacant seats on the committee.

Peter Gunn was nominated for re-election by Alistair Lothian and Diane Turner and seconded by Lesley Parkington and Jane Gunn.

**15. Resolutions:** David Leiserach

David presented his resolution to the Members. DL advised that as the former footpaths officer he has become interested in the footpaths that are used which are not classed as PROW. DL undertook a study of the English legislation and found that there is nothing comparable in the Manx legislation. So should we wish to request a footpath to become a permissive route or PROW we would follow the example set in precedent by the UK process and principles. To this end he has recreated the principles as a questionnaire which should the resolution be successful members can complete and return to him for recording, analysis and processing where applicable. Some examples of the questions include: how often have you used xx path? Is it always been the same (direction, styles, gates etc)? Any posted instructions from landlord? Have you ever been prevented from using the way?

Question to members do you wish to pursue this?

DL provided further clarification with some examples of routes:

- 1) Left from the Bay hotel in port Erin, path goes up the hill to two properties (Highcliff and Beach mount) you have to go up a driveway to the Darrag to access Ballnahow Road. – none of that is currently a public road or PROW
- 2) Ballagale avenue Surby
- 3) St Johns, behind the public conveniences, down the steps exiting at the old post office
- 4) Killbregga.

Question from the members: What are the benefits?

A: DL - our group name is MCFG and we are achieving the group objective of preserving the footpaths

A: Tony Archibald – This would offer clarity and more surety in the event of an insurance claim

Mrs Gunn raised a query regarding landowners stating a preference regarding the areas within her land to remain flexible i.e. the path around Fleshwick. DL advised he would not pursue if the landlord disagreed. The intention is to apply for Permissive paths or Public Rights of Way without going to a public enquiry.

Peter Gunn advised on some of the history of the PROW Process. Which began in 1961 when the then Highways board served notice on all tenants affected by the proposed PROWs. If parties did not object it was registered and PROW adopted. Where objections were raised this went to a tribunal.

This created a provisional list which was made in to a definitive list in 1982. Additional PROWs have subsequently been added.

DL agreed that a Permissive route is preferred and where owner cannot be found this would be a PROW route. DL gave an example of the 12 shares in Beary mountain – there are 16 owners to date that have been found! The initial focus would be on the clear and obvious usage and ones with a benefit / worthwhile.

A vote was held and over 50% of members agreed for DL to proceed through the committee when the initial focus would be on the clear and obvious usage and ones with a benefit / worthwhile.

#### **16. AOB:**

Procedural questions: Clive Walsh

- Members had not been given the opportunity to ask question of the committee report or accounts. The Chairman apologised for his procedural oversight and asked if any body had any questions - there were none.
- No details of a vote or who else has been nominated for the committee. The Chairman apologised for omitting to say that no other nominations for the Committee had been received, that Peter Gunn and Louise Whitelegg were the only two nominations.
- Paul Sheridan asked if we are looking for a better rate of return for our funds. The Chairman advised that once the move from Isle of man Bank to Lloyds had been completed a review of the handling of the Group's funds would be carried out.
- Jane Falconer asked if we have any plans on how to spend club funds. The Chair advised that this had been covered in the report and that if anyone had any ideas or suggestions they should bring them to the committee.
- Tony Archibald spoke about the land around the Happy Hikers and that we need to maintain the carving and seat well. Alistair advised that some maintenance has been done and that there is a commitment to look at this bi-annually.

Meeting Closed at 19.45