



WALKERS ARE WELCOME CIC

Towns and villages with something special to offer walkers
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/5



Pic: Japanese visitors admire the view at Chepstow

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2014-15 Has been a significant year in the eight year history of Walkers are Welcome with major changes in the organisation and structure and operating procedures.

The year began with an excellently organised Get-Together in the Welsh border town of Chepstow. A wonderful product of the Get-Together is the wall hanging consisting of embroidered squares submitted by member towns. Each square is different and depicts features of each town. The wall hanging had a recent outing to Wivelscombe where it was much admired. It is available for any town to display, just contact the good folks in Chepstow.

ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE.

The committee was disappointed to learn that efforts to change our organisation to a registered charity or Charitable Incorporated Organisation had been unsuccessful. Therefore we had to start virtually from scratch and try a different approach. Becoming a Community Interest Company seemed the best option but we needed additional advice.

Our redoubtable Secretary, Ann Sandell, discovered that free legal advice was available in Cumbria. So, in December the Deputy Chairman Sam Phillips, Secretary Ann Sandell, Treasurer Geoff Kitt and Committee member, Barry McCallum met the advisor in Kirkby Stephen and agreed a strategy. The outcome was that in May we became a Community Interest Company with Directors and an executive committee made up of directors and elected committee members. New Directors training has been completed.

Sadly, in January, our Chairman, Nigel Botting, decided to stand down and Sam Phillips assumed the Chairman's role. Our thanks go to Nigel for all his hard work. Barry McCallum agreed to be Deputy Chairman.

GET-TOGETHER(s)

As you will know by now the Get-Together planned for Sidmouth has been replaced with this one day AGM event and we are grateful to Whitchurch. The cancellation of the planned event was unfortunate but necessary.



This year we have had a Regional Get-Together, held in Kirkby Stephen in August. It was a very informal but hugely successful day with minimal speeches, a lovely walk, a simple soup and sandwich lunch and lots of chatting, ideas swapping and networking. There may be opportunities for other regions to follow suit. From a personal point of view, I travelled north and it was wonderful to be able to chat to so many people from the northern towns.

Pic. First walk group, Millennium Bridge, Kirkby Stephen,

The 2016 Get-Together will be hosted by Caistor, Horncastle and Market Rasen in Lincolnshire Friday 14th to Sunday 16th October 2016. Plans are also under way for a 10th anniversary “do” at Hebden Bridge 21st and 22nd October 2017.

ANNUAL RETURNS

Every town is required to provide an Annual Return, their report giving details of how they have continued to meet the 6 criteria. Receiving and analysing these has been a major headache for committee members, especially with the number of accredited towns exceeding 100. This year we have appointed additional Mentors and they have scrutinised the returns for the towns in their areas. It’s still far from perfect but it is a big development. The biggest enhancement of all would be for member towns to send their Annual Returns in on time by 31st January.

As the organisation matures it is inevitable that some towns will leave or fall by the way side and this year, following scrutiny of the AR’s several towns have been removed from the list of accredited full members; difficult decisions, but necessary to maintain quality and we are still growing steadily. Many have the opportunity to be reaccredited as soon as improvements are made and the criteria is once again being met.

BUSINESS PLAN

One of the first things the Committee did on becoming a CIC was to prepare a three year Business Plan. This has been loaded onto the website. There are a number of headings but perhaps the longer term objectives should be mentioned. They are as follows:

Ensuring the long term survival of the network

- Fostering closer working relationships between members and with the National Committee
- Maintaining and improving quality standards
- Developing a funding package from a variety of incomes to ensure sustainability
- Encouraging additional facilities within communities
- Maintaining the network
- Raising the profile of the brand and logo recognition through marketing and publicity
- Improving the appreciation of the brand through partnership working and lobbying
- Adding additional membership resources
- Seek new and replacement National Committee members and Mentors
- Recruit part-time professional help

ACTION PLAN

Following adoption of the Business Plan the Committee set to work producing and Action Plan to achieve the Objectives. I would be dishonest to say this whole process has been easy but we are making great strides and we hope that before long you, the member towns will begin to see the results. We have already produced a Calendar giving details of major activities and deadlines through the year. It’s a “Perpetual” calendar so does not use specific dates but weeks and months.



Pictured left to right, Randal Metzner & Rob Talbot looking for WaW stickers. Kate Ashbrook in Gillingham. Sam Phillips presenting to Sedbergh in Kirkby Stephen

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Fact and Information Sheets.

During the year we have produced a number of Fact sheets and Procedural information sheets that, we hope, members will find useful. We even stuck collective necks out and produced a complaints procedure and new equal opportunities policy.

Mentoring

The Mentor network is indispensable. Without the Mentors it would be difficult, if not impossible to run the organisation. Our "Mentor in Chief" Sheila Talbot has done a wonderful job in recruiting, educating and encouraging our Mentors. Why not give it a go and offer to join the Mentors' group. It's a truly satisfying activity.

Website

Our Web master, Rob Talbot, has been busy during the year making modifications and improvements to the web site. All the information referred to above is on the web site for you to use. Thanks to Rob Talbot.

Committee meetings

The Committee has met regularly, every month, by telephone and we've had 3 Face-to-Face meetings, one in March in Knutsford, Cheshire and 2 at the Get-Together in Chepstow plus some regional sub-group meetings. The F2F meetings are particularly valuable as much more can be achieved sitting round a table but they are time consuming and relatively expensive.

Japanese visitors

In August this year we entertained a group of four Japanese Professors who came to see how the WaW organisation works. They came as the direct result of the work done by Sheila Talbot when she went to Japan last year. The visitors were a lovely group and went to Winchcombe, Dursley, Ross-on-Wye, Chepstow and Hebden Bridge. Feedback on their visit was extremely positive and it's probable that we shall see more groups of Japanese walkers in the UK soon.

SUMMARY.

As I said at the beginning this report, it has been a momentous year in many respects and the organisation has moved forward significantly due, in no small part, to the extremely hard work put in by the Committee members. There is still a lot to do, but we are on the way.

I must finish by recognising the truly extraordinary contribution made by our tireless Secretary, Ann Sandell. She is a tower of strength; efficient, accurate, helpful, friendly, firm when needed and ALWAYS THERE!!!. On behalf of the entire organisation; Thank-you, Ann.

Sam Phillips - Chairman

Income and Expenditure for Financial Year ending 31 December 2014

<u>2013</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2014</u>
5,090	Member Subs	5,575	91	Admin. Costs	278
	Sales of Stickers and			Postage	86
210	Leaflets	481	93	Printing and Stationery	176
-	Commission	72	-	Face to face meeting –	
				January	596
			1,464	March	1,375
			790	October	584
			391	Mentoring Expenses	328
				Attendance at Conferences,	
			289	etc.	400
			201	Other Expenses	396
			6	Telephone Expenses	82
			480	Website	138
			242	Window Stickers	242
			350	Honarium	350
			108	Bunting/Banners	-
			237	Leaflets	-
			264	Advertisement	-
			156	Binders/Handbooks	842
				Raffle Registration	40
			<u>5,162</u>		<u>5,913</u>
			138	Surplus	215
<u>5,300</u>		<u>6,128</u>	<u>5,300</u>		<u>6,128</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2014

<u>Assets</u>	<u>Represented by:</u>		
Cash in Bank		6,682	Accumulated Funds b/f
			Plus surplus for year
		<u>6,682</u>	215
			<u>6,682</u>

2015 update will be available at the AGM Sunday 8th November 2015

The 2014/2015 national committee have been:

Sam Phillips	Chairman/Director	Ross-on-Wye
Barry McCallum	Deputy Chairman/Director	Boroughbridge
Geoff Kitt	Treasurer/Director	Moffat
Ann Sandell	Secretary/Director	Kirkby Stephen
Shelia Talbot	Mentoring/Director	Winchcombe
Chris Prescott	Director	Bradfield
Ruth Coulthard	Social Networking/Director	Abergavenny
Helen Kenneally	National Committee	Chepstow
Helen Pitman	Co-opted	Caister
Rob Talbot	Webmaster	Winchcombe
Ann Scotter	Mentor	Wivelscombe
Randal Metzger	Mentor	Otley
Naomi Wrighton	Mentor	Wellington
Paul Gowan	Mentor	Chepstow
Malcom Wilkinson	Mentor	Prestatyn
Peter Corkhill	Mentor	Elham

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