HIGHWORTH AND SWINDON WALKING CLUB

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING, HELD ON THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2023

Present: Andrew Snowden (AS, Chair), Tina Phoenix (TP, Membership Secretary), Sue Aiken (SA), Marilyn Todd (MT, Sunday Walks Coordinator), Dave Hazell (DH, Treasurer), Don Webster (DW) and Sharon Kimber (SK, Wednesday Walks Coordinator).

1. Introductions

AS welcomed all to the first meeting of the new committee (following the recent AGM elections) and introduced everyone.

2. Previous minutes (from 9th January 2023 meeting)

The previous minutes were read through and there were no corrections, matters arising or outstanding actions.

3. Report from Treasurer

DH reported that the club's current bank balance was [redacted], plus [redacted] in cash.
Significant expenditure to date in 2023 was for public liability insurance (£280), AGM costs [redacted] and Ramblers affiliation [redacted]
DH will be progressing the addition of AS and DW as authorised signatories for the club's bank account.
Discussion took place about on-going club expenditure and the process for authorising this, including setting a limit above which additional authorisation would be required (e.g. via email or the committee's WhatsApp group chat).
Action: AS is to discuss with Pete Saunders (club webmaster), the costs of the club's Flikr account and website hosting.
Post meeting note: Gerry Reilly, the examiner of the 2022 accounts, has agreed to examine the 2023 accounts.

4. Report from Membership Secretary

TP reported that 116 members had paid their 2023 subscription and 18 from late year's membership list had yet to do so. If outstanding subs are not paid by the end of February, their membership will lapse, and they would not receive any further membership communications.
Action: TP will ask Pete Saunders to send out a "global" reminder email to the current membership list.

AS proposed setting up an automated link from any website enquiries to the membership secretary and felt there is currently no obvious route to apply for membership on the website, although it is understood that Pete Saunders has built a prototype membership application form for use on the website, but it is not yet "live". AS also felt there should be an online

method for payment of membership fee, as an alternative to cash and paper application forms.
AS saw a need to increase guidance for walkers regarding suitable clothing and footwear choices.

5. April-June 2023 walks programmes

MT explained that forthcoming walks programmes are usually ready for publication around two weeks before they are due to commence. She has a full Sunday programme but is awaiting details from some leaders.

SK needs walks for another two dates in order to fill the Wednesday programme (5th and 25th April). She asked whether leaders need First Aid training. It was felt this wasn't essential, as other First Aiders were usually on walks and could render assistance.

AS was keen to simplify/automate the process of merging individual walk details into the programmes.
Action: AS to speak with Pete Saunders about this.

6. Electronic membership cards

AS noted that this subject was discussed at the recent AGM and TP mentioned that Pete Saunders was looking into it.
MT noted that Cotswold Outdoor would accept paper or ecards in order to grant the discount to members (confirmed by Robin Clegg at the AGM) (the case of Go Outdoors has not been explored).
AS wondered whether it was essential to have ICE information on either form of membership card; perhaps it was more readily accessible on a label on the outside of a rucksack and the emergency services can access ICE data on Smart mobile phones.
The general view was to continue with the evaluation of ecards.
Action: TP to liaise with Pete Saunders on ecard viability, format and cost; then produce a summary of findings and email to the committee.

7. Walk grading/description scheme

AS noted the matter was discussed at the AGM, including a presentation on a different type grading system by Pete Saunders (an "A to F" system, from dead flat to very steep climbs, with a "form of words" to underpin the new system). This generated a lively discussion.
AS wondered whether the members wanted a new grading system or should more detail be given in the walk description "box" in the walk programmes (the two are not mutually exclusive).
Action: committee members to continue to discuss with walk leaders.

MT mentioned there have been criticisms over actual walk lengths being significantly longer than stated in programmes.
SK felt a more detailed walk description would be the best change to make.

AS felt the general consensus of the meeting for the short term was in favour of more detail in the walk description, particularly on gradients, stiles and terrain.

8. Advice to walkers

AS felt that more advice and guidance was needed for potential walkers with the club (e.g. suitable clothing and footwear) and the website should be expanded to include this, together with an email to all members.
Action: all to review the existing wording and AS with discuss with Pete Saunders.

9. First Aid kits

AS wondered whether the present kits are suitable for walking club purposes (i.e. quantity and type of contents). He reported that feedback from the first aid course attendees was that they issued kits (which vary) were felt not to support interventions for more than minor cuts etc with plasters and ointment, rather than items to deal with the consequences of slips and trips (e.g. swelling, sprains and heavy bleeding).
MT has taken over responsibility for First Aid kits from Sheila Fletcher and currently has three small kits in stock.
Action: MT to ask Sheila Fletcher about the supplier(s) she uses and how she decided upon the contents of kits.

AS felt it would be advisable to give larger kits to first aid course attendees and those who have previously been first aid trained and also the leaders of Welsh and remote walks but be mindful of the extra costs involved.

Action: AS will sound out regular walk leaders on the way forward.

10. Navigation workshops

AS advised that the next workshop would be on Wednesday 8th March, and it would be a navigation focussed session but would also be useful for first time attendees. This workshop will be re-run at least once. He and Morag plan to sort out a date for a third workshop.

11. AOB

SA asked how members could have their names added to the Wednesday WhatsApp group. MT said it could be done by either herself or Pete Saunders.

AS mentioned the club had been approached by the “Save The Old Highworth Golf Course” working group within the Town Council (by email), for its view on its future uses. AS has contacted [redacted] to ask for some background to inform our reply. The club has also been contacted by a group concerned about rights of way on the route of the former Highworth railway line.
AS closed the meeting closed at 9.45.