

Wight Sole AGM 15th July 2009

At Bargeman's Rest, Newport

Meeting started at 8.35pm

PRESENT: Martin and Tracey Darch, Suzanne and Dave Aitken, Gary Clarke, Alison Cardy and Laura Lee

APOLOGIES: Hilary Corr, Alf Damp

MATTERS ARISING:

Publicity and advertising was discussed and it was agreed to continue listing all our walks in the IW County Press and Beacon magazine. It was agreed to list walks without start points but include WS contact details to be placed where possible in Libraries and Doctors' surgeries. We still haven't placed an advert on Wightbay.

Action: Alison to contact Patrick Oliver about distributing WS walk listings along with group 1 walks in Libraries. Also investigate advertising on Wightbay.

Listings with the start points and small cards to be distributed at shows in August.

Badges were discussed again briefly but it had been previously agreed to make simple laminated badges just for the shows with name of volunteer, new RA logo and WS logo.

Action: Suzanne to make small laminated badges for the shows.

Only two members have a Wight Sole T-shirt . Alison still has transfers with WS logo if anyone wishes to make up their own T-shirt.

The adverts in the County Press in September 2008, January 2009 and July 2009 raised some interest especially when accompanied by an editorial piece in January. It was decided not to place another advert for a few months.

Where possible new walkers have been given leaflets or small cards to encourage them to join however attendance on walks varies unpredictably. For this reason we conducted a survey to discover what we could do to attract more members. A fairly high number of people said they wanted more mainland walks but turnout has been poor especially during warm summer days possibly due to the time factor. It was decided to have occasional short Saturday walks due to varied turnout and restrict mainland walks mainly to spring and autumn.

We decided to continue with fortnightly walks at weekends with additional summer evening walks other than on Wednesdays to see if they are more popular Time taken on walks is till being placed on the website and programme distributed by email. We agreed it was helpful especially for new walkers.

We decided not to buy a luminous gillet for front and back markers but will encourage the use torches on foggy days.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Wight Sole was officially formed in May 2005 after initial gatherings late in 2004. Despite some turnover (due to members leaving the Island), membership numbers have remained

fairly stable at around 30-40. However we have a contact list of over 40 and many of our walkers are members of Island group one or mainland branches of RA. There has been a growing tendency for members of both IOW groups to join each other's walks.

We have continued to walk every two or three weeks at the weekend (usually on Sunday) to try to fit with most people's working and home life. Saturday walks have been more or less stopped due to their lack of popularity. However we did hold a short very well attended walk on a Saturday morning during the recent programme.

Walks are various lengths and across the Island (ranging from around 4 to 16 miles) as well as occasional mainland visits, and usually start at 10.30. During the summer, we hold midweek evening walks (which were well attended in the past) but in 2008, attendances on evening walks were down -presumably due to inclement weather. We are still experimenting with a start time that is convenient /attractive for evening walks. For the first time in the summer of 2008, we had also to cancel a number of walks on the programme due to torrential rain. However, we have completed over 24 beautiful walks since the last AGM and we continue to find new pathways and areas of interest that we have not previously encountered

Walks are well attended (averaging at around 12- 15) and there has been a decision to not meet more regularly for risk of diluting attendance rates. However the number of new recruits seeking to lead walks has been somewhat limited so far.

The group have maintained links with similar RA groups (Wessex Weekend Walkers & Dorset Young Walkers) on the mainland and joint walks have been held. Such a walk in the New Forest in September 2008 involved over 30 walkers. We have also held our own mainland walks but these have been not so well attended - possibly due to the time commitment, early start or travel costs.

Members of Wight Sole also continue to help staff the RA stalls at the summer shows which raised our profile and helped generate interest. We have placed advertisements (with photographs) in both the 'IOW County Press' and 'Beacon' magazine but this yielded little permanent interest. We also had a full page feature in County Press. However more successful in attracting interest or membership has been the simple listing of all our walks in the County Press what's on section by Alison Cardy. Surprisingly, The Beacon magazine will only list walks taking place in each local edition

Our programme is decided by the committee about 3-4 months ahead, and is viewable on our website www.wightsole.org.uk. We have continued to list the approximate duration of the walks after requests to do so by the membership. Anyone can look at the website, but group members have a password to see the contact details of the walk leader and the start location.

We endeavour to have representation at Area meetings but this is not always possible due to other commitments. For example the present Chair is a school governor and has to attend meetings held at the same time as Area meetings.

Gary Clarke 11/06/09

ACCOUNTS AND TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance in bank	£254.50
Last advert in CP	£132.00
Balance	£122.50

We have spent money advertising in IW County Press 3 times this year and bought 2 first aid kits.

ELECTION OF WIGHT SOLE OFFICERS

Treasurer in the chair for the election of Chairman.

Chairman Gary Clarke proposed Tracey, seconded Martin

Chairman in chair for rest of the posts

Treasurer and Webmaster - Dave Aitken	proposed Laura, seconded Tracey
Membership Secretary - Suzanne Aitken	proposed Tracey, seconded Alison
Publicity/Graphics officer – Alison Cardy	proposed Martin, seconded Suzanne
Deputy Chair – Tracey Darch	proposed Gary, seconded Dave

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Currently membership of all IOW area RA is sent to Tracey. It was agreed it would be more useful to see a separate list of WS members.

Action: Tracey to ask for WS membership to be sent to Suzanne.

We also discussed using newer photographs from our walks and a banner with the wording 'FOR YOUNGER WALKERS' for the shows if there is time to change the displays.

Meeting ended at 9:35