

## Walk Alton

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting

Monday 7 December 2020 at 18.30

By Zoom

### MINUTES

Present: Fiona Lapraik (Chair), Natalie Beckell (Alton Town Council), Jackie Browne (WAW mentor and Whitchurch WAW), Helen Dudley (Honorary Treasurer), Stephen Duff, Ian Fleming, John Jones, Councillor Pam Jones, Julie Wakefield

No apologies

- ◆ The Chair reported on the work of the committee since its last AGM covering the period up until 31 March 2020. In its second year of existence Walk Alton had concentrated its focus on the mental and physical health benefits of walking and general wellbeing. This included promoting the benefits via social media and hosting and being represented at a range of public events. Walk Alton had been heavily engaged with the May 2019 Walking Festival, and other walking initiatives, including Alton Women Walkers.
- ◆ Walk Alton engaged with Walkers are Welcome, attending their annual get-together in Kirkby Stephen in October 2019, and submitting an annual return on its achievements in January 2020 which received very positive feedback.
- ◆ The Honorary Treasurer presented her report and Walk Alton's independently-examined accounts, which were approved by the Committee.
- ◆ The Committee expressed their thanks to Fiona Lapraik, who was resigning from the Committee, for her major contribution in establishing Walk Alton and guiding it through its first two years.
- ◆ Ian Fleming was appointed as the new Chair of Walk Alton, Julie Wakefield offered to take over the role of Honorary Treasurer, and

Helen Dudley remained in post as Secretary. Stephen Duff was welcomed to the Committee as a new member.

- ◆ The new Chair requested that the Committee should meet early in the New Year to agree its strategic focus and to develop a strategic plan. The case for continuing to focus on health and well-being remained strong, given the ongoing pandemic, and building on the very successful open meeting in the previous year that brought together experts in this field. Committee members were asked to give further thought to the strategic direction and practical ideas for Walk Alton's agenda in 2021 in advance of the next meeting.
- ◆ The Chair also suggested that Walk Alton should look at broadening representation on its committee and also consider forming links with other relevant local organisations, like Cycle Alton and ACAN. The 2021 Walking Festival provided an opportunity for proactive participation by Walk Alton, including topping and tailing the Festival with walks to the neighbouring Hampshire Walkers are Welcome towns of Overton and Whitchurch.

## **Minutes – Walk Alton Committee**

### **Meeting – Tuesday 19 January 2021, 18.30 by Zoom**

**Present:**

Helen Dudley  
Stephen Duff  
Ian Fleming  
John Jones  
Pam Jones  
Julie Wakefield

1 This was the first meeting since December's AGM, when Ian had taken over as Chair. Helen and Julie had agreed that Helen would retain the Treasurer role for the time being as Julie was heavily committed with work and the route marking and mapping options.

#### **Priorities for 2021**

2 Ian outlined his plans for a survey of local organisations and the community to help shape Walk Alton's priorities for the year ahead. Promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of walking were very high up the list, along with enhancing Alton as a Walkers are Welcome town, possibly encouraging a wider network of towns across Hampshire. But it was important to seek wider views. Pam said that Alton Town Council (ATC) had recently approved their Health and Wellbeing Strategy (up until 2023) and subsequently circulated a copy. Walking and the annual festival featured, but there was no mention of an autumn walking week.

3 Ian went on to explain that a colleague had formatted a draft of the survey using Google Forms, and had offered to help collate the responses. The proposed distribution list was agreed, with additional suggestions of including a few local businesses, the Scouts and other local youth organisations, and local churches. Ian agreed to finalise the survey and invite the Committee to sign it off at its next meeting in early February. Once approved he would launch the survey immediately with the aim of allowing the Committee to review the findings in mid-March.

#### **Revision of the Committee and establishing an annual Forum**

4 Ian explained his thinking behind the proposal to establish a Forum that could act as an advisory sounding board and feed ideas into the Committee and help support delivery. He had seen this work well in other settings, and it would help Walk Alton engage strategically with representative community organisations. Pam agreed to join the Forum and step down from the Committee. John told the Committee he would step down to be replaced by another Ramblers' representative. John said he was willing to continue supporting Walk Alton with the walks library, the website and help at the spring and summer events. Ian offered a vote of thanks to both Pam and John for their work and support since the inception of Walk Alton.

5 Some potential new committee members had been approached and were interested in joining the committee, to represent different aspects of walking: health and wellbeing; encouraging younger people to walk; and the carbon reduction benefits of walking. The Committee endorsed the new appointees and Ian agreed to contact them to issue a formal invitation.

6 It was confirmed that the new arrangements were permitted under the current Constitution, and the Committee approved the new format for the Committee and Forum. It was planned to hold the first meeting of the Forum by Zoom in April ahead of the main walking festival, and to have a face-to-face meeting of the Forum to coincide with the AGM in the autumn. Pam suggested the Town Hall might be a suitable cost-free venue for holding the Forum.

### Initiatives for discussion

7 The Committee agreed:

- to actively support the May Walking Festival, and to engage and brief walk leaders so they could promote a range of issues such as H&WB, WaW etc.
- pandemic permitting to have a stall at the April Farmer's Market, as well as stalls at the ATC event on 8 May (Walking and Cycling Festival), 19 June (Regency Week Community Fair) and 11 July (Eco Fair).
- to give further thought to publishing a regular newsletter. Ian had a suggested format in mind, but having sufficient interesting content would be key to its success.
- to endorse Julie's work on producing a walking route with text and pictures and she hoped to add a map using Viewranger.
- to note plans for Alton to join East Hants Community Rail Partnership. Funding for leaflets of walks from local rail stations should be available.
- to note Stephen's discussions with Reading Buses on their initiatives to promote local walks – one example was a linear walk from Newbury to Reading. He had written to Stagecoach to see if they would be interested in doing something similar using the various bus options open to Alton.
- That both transport initiatives could rebuild confidence in and encourage the use of public transport post pandemic. All items to be discussed at the next meeting.

### Social media and website

9 Pam agreed to retain ownership of the Walk Alton Facebook page for now. Julie updated on Instagram where followership was good. Twitter had been less successful, and Helen offered to trial it for a few weeks to see if we could do some tweets and determine if there was any interest.

10 Stephen had reviewed the website with some professional help. The analytics had shown increased usage last year and overall it was deemed to be 'not that bad at all'. However, there was too much content and it lacked uniformity, and the messaging needed to be a lot clearer. It would be helpful to be able to monitor the numbers downloading walks as this was a popular hit. Stephen's son-in-law had

offered to help with loading items, photos etc and Stephen offered to arrange the editing and rewriting to make the messaging clearer and less dense.

### Finances

11 Walk Alton had applied to ATC's Community Grant scheme for £1250 for a range of display and publicity materials. Ian was due to present the case at the Council meeting on 20 January. ATC had funded the annual subscription to WAW, and Ian had also provided funding to meet the costs of Zoom Pro over the next few months until we could meet in person.

### AOB

12 Helen reported that Walk Alton were now supporters of Cycle Alton with a standing invitation to their wider group meetings. There was some synergy between the two groups and it had been agreed to share plans and collaborate where appropriate. Ian had also signed Walk Alton up to becoming a member of ACAN (Alton Climate Action Network), as we had areas of mutual interest.

### **Date of next meeting of the Walk Alton Management Committee**

**13 19.30 pm, Wednesday 3 February 2021 by Zoom**

cc: Committee members  
Pat Harris, Alton Town Council  
Jackie Brown, WAW mentor