

Wessex Mountaineering Club

Minutes of 64th Annual General Meeting

Held 13th January 2024 at The Empress of Blandings, Copythorne, Hants

1. The meeting started at 8:00 pm.

Attendances & apologies

2. Attendees: Steve Wales, Chris Cumming, Dave Johnson (DAJ), Alan Blanchflower, Andy Cumming, Clare Johnson, Daniel Pollard, John Hayes, Kathryn Hayes, Jodi Longyear, Michelle Byrne, Malcolm (Max) Streeton, Charlene Gibson, John Whitfield, Jill Whitfield, Norman Wright, Paul Stevens, Jill Stevens, Helen Wales, Bob Mott, Jack Crewe, Hilary Crewe, John Wooler, Roy Fisher, Sue Fisher, Matt Shrimpton, Geoff Shaw
3. Apologies: Dave Milner, Andrew Turner, Jon Coutts, Doug Pigg, Pawel Tatarek, Ian Rowe, Frodo Stickel, Jon Coutts, Zoe Elliot, Chris Warfe

Minutes of the 63rd AGM

4. The minutes were accepted.

Committee Reports 2023

President

5. DAJ felt that the club had returned to normal operation and that the club has left Covid behind now. DAJ gave thanks to all the committee members for their contributions in running the club this year. Frodo for taking on the hut secretary role with Andy continuing as meet bookings secretary. Jon for arranging the programme and booking the meets, Ian for doing all the meet co-ordination. Zoe for managing the membership, Max for maintaining the website, Charlene for organising the social meets. Steve for doing the meeting minutes, Andrew for the Newsletters, and Chris for her sterling efforts with the club finances. Finally, thanks to Norman and Dan for their help on the committee and Michelle and Alan for storing the club equipment. DAJ also thanked Toto Gronlund for her help in dealing with issues at the hut.

Secretary

6. Steve reported that there had been four committee meetings over the year, held on Zoom and that there was no prospect of going back to in-person committee meetings.

Treasurer

7. Chris gave her report as treasurer. As of 31st October 2023 the club had 155 members (down from 183 in the previous year) and the total funds were £36,220 (excluding the cost of Pen y Clogwyn). There was a profit on the hut

account of £2,130 with hut income up by 100% over the previous year. There was a profit on the general account of £103, with losses occurring on the Scottish Winter meet and Lake District meet.

8. Subs and donations include payments to the Ogwen Valley rescue team, the Ramblers and Dorset Bolt Fund.
9. Chris expressed her thanks to Jack Crewe who had kindly audited the accounts.

Meets

10. In Ian's absence Steve reported on the meets. Meets were generally well attended. Some new members who attended the training weekends went on to join meets later in the year. The Scottish Winter Meet in Torridon, although not full was still well attended. Over the summer there were 5 trips to the Dolomites with a total of 20 members on these trips. Meets in 2024 were starting to receive bookings from members.

Social

11. Charlene reported on the social events last year. The club held a Spring slide show because of a lack of presentations for the Autumn 2022 slide show. An Autumn slide show was also held that included a presentation from Jack Crewe on the history of the club. The Xmas Dinner was held locally again this year following a walk in the New Forest with 10 people attending the dinner. Charlene stated that she was interested in opinions on social meets.

Programme

12. This year's programme covered under the Open Floor item on the agenda.

Membership

13. Membership figures were reported by the Treasurer and these were 153 at 31 October 2023.

Newsletter

14. In Andrew's absence Steve reported on the Newsletter. There have been two newsletters published last year (Spring and Winter), but that these two Newsletters did cover all the meets held last year. The Winter edition is Andrews' last Newsletter as he is stepping down from the committee. Andrew sees the Newsletter as the clubs archive and has been scanning and uploading print only versions of past Newsletters to the website. He has also started scanning the meet books.

Hut - Pen y Clogwyn

15. DAJ reported on the hut in Frodos' absence. Spring and Autumn working weekends were held. Clare has re-upholstered the sofa and chairs, a new bunkroom ladder had been installed by Max. The roof on the larger wood shed has been replaced. The chimney has been re-pointed. Imaginative use had

been made of a pair of old ice axes that had been donated to the club. An injector has been purchased to deal with the Japanese knotweed around the hut. There are some trees potentially threatening the hut and help from any tree surgeons would be appreciated.

16. The cesspit does not meet current environmental standards, and a sewage treatment plant has been identified to rectify this.
17. Andy reported on the hut bookings. A total of 670 person nights were booked over the year, and numbers had returned to pre-Covid levels, despite the decision to limit total number of people from 18 to 12. Profit on the hut is highly variable and depends on work done to the hut within each year, but over the last 5 years the hut has made about £2k.

Marketing & Website

18. Max reported that there had been two instances of malicious code appearing on the website. Two-factor authentication had been introduced for some committee members who have access to address details and that there is now an option for members to hide their e-mail address and postcode location (first three or four characters of the postcode).
19. Max had put up new posters at the climbing walls in the region, and had ordered a new batch of Wessex branded clothing.

Walking Group

20. Sue Fisher spoke about the local walks organised by Doug Pigg. The walks are advertised on the local-walks e-mail and on the Facebook page.

Nomination of scrutineers

21. Jill Whitfield was appointed as the scrutineer.

Election of the committee

22. Dave Johnson was elected as President, proposed by Jodi Longyear, seconded by Sue Fisher.
23. Steve Wales was elected as Secretary, proposed by Max Streeton, seconded by Jodi Longyear.
24. Chris Cumming was elected as Treasurer, proposed by Clare Johnson seconded by Charlene Gibson.
25. Ian Rowe was elected as Meet Secretary, proposed by Chris Cumming, seconded by Norman Wright.
26. Zoe Allen was elected as Membership Secretary, proposed by Chris Cumming, seconded by Daniel Pollard.
27. Jon Coutts was elected as Programme Secretary, proposed by Jodi Longyear and seconded by Charlene Gibson.

28. Frodo Stickel was elected as Hut Secretary, proposed by Alan Blanchflower and seconded by Jodi Longyear.
29. Newsletter Editor Position Vacant.
30. Charlene Gibson was elected as Social Secretary proposed by Clare Johnson, seconded by Helen Wales
31. Malcolm Streeton was elected as Marketing Secretary proposed by Norman Wright and seconded by Charlene Gibson
32. Ordinary Committee Member Position Vacant.
33. Norman Wright was willing to continue as a co-opted member of the committee
34. Andy Cumming will continue as hut bookings secretary.

Subscriptions for 2024

35. The BMC capitation now increases in-line with the retail prices index, and now stands at £23.90 for an adult. Chris stated that the running of the club costs about £10 per member.
36. Chris proposed an increase in the ordinary member subscription to £34, and that the student member subscription remain at £20, with under 18 members increased to £18. The joining fee would remain at £10.
37. Jill Stevens asked if the BMC capitation was half the amount for a half years membership. Chris responded that yes it was about half the yearly amount.
38. John Wooler asked what were the implications of not being a club affiliated BMC member. Steve responded that members would lose 3rd party liability insurance. Max added that the BMC works to support access to crags.
39. A vote was held with 21 in favour and 0 against. Proposal was carried.

Appointment of Honorary Auditor

40. Jack Crewe agreed to be honorary auditor and was appointed.
41. John Whitfield stated that he was willing to take on the role should Jack decide not to continue.

Open Floor

42. DAJ went through the meet list for the year, and stated that if the weather was bad for the local climbing meets, then these would be held at a climbing wall instead. Some changes had been made from previous years – the South Pembroke meet had been moved to the second May bank holiday, and the Lakes meet normally held then moved to the end of July. Norman mentioned a Somerset meet that had been added this year.
43. Helen asked about what was proposed for the August bank holiday this year.

44. Charlene was considering running a spring slide show again and was to gauge the level of interest. She would also canvas opinion on the Xmas Dinner Meet.
45. Steve went through the range of training that the club had done over the years. DAJ elaborated on the training days at Swanage which are an opportunity to practice under the watchful eye of experienced people. The training days have covered basic rope skills like abseiling and setting up anchors as well as self-rescue depending upon what people wanted to do.
46. John Wooler said he had been on the navigation training in the New Forest organised by Max and recommended that this be run again.
47. Jodi commented that the recent improvements at the hut were very good.
48. Max asked about the timing of the AGM and whether it would be possible to hold it earlier in the day. This would allow the AGM to be combined with an activity (walk or climbing wall).
49. Jill requested that AGM minutes be sent out earlier
50. Charlene suggested holding the AGM as hybrid meeting. Steve commented Others commented that hybrid meetings tend to be dominated by those attending in-person.
51. Ashley (by e-mail) was interested in a mechanism for finding climbing partners without going on meets. DAJ suggested including a tick box consent on the membership list for those wishing to be contacted.

WMC Literary Prize

52. The entries for the WMC Literary prize were Dave Milner with his article on the Scottish Winter meet in Torridon. Dave will receive a £20 Cotswold Gift Voucher.

WMC Photo Prize

53. Clare announced that the winner of the photo competition was Jodi Longyear with his photo from South Georgia. Jodi will receive a £20 Cotswold Gift Voucher.

AOB

54. There were no AOB items.

The meeting closed at 10:30pm.