



Coleford Welcomes Walkers

06/12/21

6.30pm

Council Chamber

Chair:	Stuart Cox	Note taker:	Ella Beard
Attendees:	Stuart Cox (Vice Chair), Ella Beard (Secretary), Debbie Sturgess, Cathy Sandles, Geoff Sandles, Jane Baird, Nick Penny, Martin Green, Later Simon Jones (outgoing Chair)		
Apologies:	Alison Stinson		

Minutes

Agenda item 1: To agree the minutes of previous meeting **Facilitator** Stuart

Discussion:

None

Conclusions:

Minutes were accurate.

Extra item:	Stuart welcomed Martin Green to the meeting and the committee. Martin had been unable to make the previous meeting, has a great interest in both walking and cycling and was welcomed by all.	Facilitator: Stuart
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Agenda item 2: Election of Chair: **Facilitator:** Stuart

Discussion:

Simon resigned as Chair following the previous meeting due to increasing commitments on his time. Stuart was happy to Chair this meeting but would not be able to Chair due to his position as Town Councillor. Stuart thanked Simon in his absence for his sterling work in getting Coleford Walkers are Welcome status. Debbie Sturgess offered to be Chair.

Conclusions:

Debbie Sturgess was elected Chair and will take over the position at the end of this meeting.

Simon Jones arrived and was again thanked.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
None		

Agenda Item 3: Feedback from WaW meeting at Kington **Facilitator:** Stuart

Discussion:

Stuart and Marilyn Cox attended the annual WaW meeting and AGM at Kington on behalf of Coleford Welcomes Walkers, an event which rotates around WaW towns. Most attending were from the closest towns although there were some there from as far afield as East Yorkshire.

There were many useful ideas and towns had taken along very interesting resources for walkers which they had produced themselves to encourage locals and tourists to walk locally. (Held by Stuart)

Useful contacts were made with Ross and Chepstow WaW committee members.

Stuart summarized the Keynote speech regarding the 25-year environment plan launched by the Government in 2018.

Of particular interest was the Deregulation Act, unrecorded footpaths before 1949 will cease to be in 2026. WaW are working with other agencies to try to abolish the 2026 date.

We need to demonstrate that walking is not just good for health, but for the local economy etc.

Lockdowns have introduced many new people to walking, with lots not following footpaths particularly across farmland resulting in complaints from farmers. Criminal trespass can be applied in this situation. There is a need to educate the public. As has been previously noted by this committee, there has been increased conflict between walkers and cyclists.

Attending members at that meeting were then split into two workshops.

1. Walk this Way newsletter – is produced to extend members' knowledge. Quarterly electronic news letters are sent out to members and other interested parties. Coleford was invited to submit a 500- 750-word article along with an advert (to be paid for) and a photo. Theme for December is Film locations, Stuart and Marilyn sent in an article and Simon kindly paid for an advert for Forest Deli. The article was amended to take out mention of the Tourist Information Centre at the request of WaW.

Future themes include: March Children: June Royal Associations: September Military history: December 22 Literary connections.

2. Diversity – mostly aimed at encouraging younger people, singles and families with young children. Suggestions included treasure hunts, walk end activity sessions. Kirkby Stephen have run foam versions of paintballing on a walk. Health walks for the elderly were discussed, including differentiation of walks, length, difficulty etc.– health walks are already happening in Coleford. Ethnic diversity – this was discussed as a more complex thing to plan with consideration for clothing, toilets, food, praying needing to be taken into account. Black girls' hike was given as an example of an organization working in this environment. Information can be found at <https://www.bghuk.com>

The next AGM will be held at Alton in Hampshire 4 – 9th October with the AGM on Saturday 8th. All walks will be free, 3 walks a day of various lengths. There are two local breweries!

A brief discussion took place regarding the possibility of a Walking Hub.

Conclusions:

Many good ideas came from the meeting. Representatives should be sent to the next meeting if at all possible.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
To agree who will attend next year's meeting	All	WaW will give a date for booking.

Agenda Item 4: Adequate marketing of towns WAW status **Facilitator:** Stuart

Discussion:

Stuart had produced a list of ideas from the meeting – please find attached. These were discussed and agreed many excellent ideas. Stuart is holding the pack of leaflets shared if anyone would like to see them.

A discussion took place regarding possible funding and grants and the need for a bank account or the possibility of asking Coleford Town Council to be a holding authority for CWW.

A discussion took place regarding reporting of issues with footpaths.

Information to go into Campsites locally suggesting circular walks into Coleford, plus the possibility of information to be displayed on screens in each room at Forest Holidays. Greenways, Bracelands and Rushmere would be good places to start with Information boards to promote Coleford.

Gloucester County Council will be running 1 day training in footpath care in May, volunteers then get given equipment – use of which would be covered by Gloucester's insurance – May was regarded as too late by the Committee due to the fast growth through spring. We need to act sooner.

Litter picking was discussed.

Drug dealing on Coleford footpaths and land was discussed along with what was seen as lack of action on the part of Police. – Police are concentrating on 'County Lines' – stopping the drugs getting into the area at all.

Conclusions:

It was agreed that we need more people to help at events than are on the committee. Important to check how these volunteers are valued and used.

A Map of the location of Coleford's rainbow benches would be useful as a precursor to 'Happy to chat' benches.

A 'Children in Need' walk was proposed for the 2nd weekend in October.

A map of Coleford's footpaths in the style of an underground map was thought an excellent idea.

A litter pick was suggested for spring – involving Coop if possible.

It was agreed that as many people as possible reporting footpath issues is likely to elicit more action than just a single person being point of contact.

3 priorities

Maintenance of the footpath network

Develop web page content – what appeals to both locals and visitors

Linking what we already have and how we move that forward.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Promote ourselves to others who may be willing to help with practical things such as walking and maintaining footpaths	All	Ongoing
✓ Check insurance regarding maintenance of footpaths	Stuart	ASAP or for next meeting
✓ Check re status of bank account opening	Ella with Alison	ASAP next meeting
✓ Ensure actions are carried forward to next meeting	Debbie/Ella	ASAP next meeting

Agenda item 5: Progress on Website

Facilitator: Simon

Discussion:

Simon reported that the website is currently not working, (checked 8/12/21 and 10/1/22 and appeared to be fine, but not updated.) but that work is ongoing to add 'what's in town', easy to find walks. The Facebook page was discussed.

Conclusions:

A List of businesses which actively agree that they commit to welcoming walkers needs to be added – and therefore investigated.

Links to the Heritage and Geology apps should be added.
Facebook will start to be used in the New Year.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ To update work on website.	Simon/Debbie	ASAP next meeting
✓ Admin access to Facebook page shared to Chair/Secretary along with access to email through Website.	Simon/Debbie	ASAP next meeting
✓ Investigate local businesses attitudes to WaW status and List for inclusion on Websites.	Simon offered	ASAP

Agenda item 6: Walking Festival 2022 **Facilitator:** Stuart

Discussion:

Dates were supplied as 7-15th May 2022

Suggestions were made to use the dinosaur walk on the Geology Map and the idea of themed walks – Children's/Heritage and so on.

Conclusions:

Ideas would be shared with Walking Festival team.

New walk leaders are welcome.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
Anyone who would like to lead a walk should contact Stuart please	All	ASAP.

Agenda item 7: Any other business **Facilitator:** Ella

Discussion:

Martin spoke about the HoHoHo Christmas walk and how much vegetation is a problem up to Forest Hills.

Conclusions:

It was agreed to invite a County Councillor to the next meeting

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ To write to Gloucester County Councillor requesting as above.	Debbie/Ella	24/1/2022
✓ To contact WaW and ask to put Coleford on their map	Ella	ASAP before next meeting

Agenda item 8: Date of next meeting **Facilitator:** Ella

Discussion

Appropriate dates for all were discussed.

Conclusions:

Date of next meeting 7/2/2022 6.30-8pm in the Council chamber

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Prepare agenda and distribute	Debbie/Ella	30/01/2022
✓ Book room	Ella	ASAP

Other information

Please read: Attached: Ideas from Walkers are Welcome meeting at Kington.

Please bring: