



Coleford Welcomes Walkers Steering Group
Minutes
26th January 2023
Coleford Town Council Chambers
18:30 – 20:00

Attendees: Debbie Sturgess (Chair & Treasurer), Libby Sharpe (Public Engagements Officer), Stuart Cox, Jack Sturgess (Secretary)

Apologies: Simon Jones

Volunteers: Two volunteers **To confirm the minutes of the last meeting.**

The minutes concerning the Annual General Meeting, held on the 24th of November 2022 were agreed to be an accurate portrayal.

1. Actions from the last meeting – updates

i) Partnerships with other organisations / businesses

a) PRoW / training

The chair informed the steering group that an opportunity had arisen from the PRoW Team, to receive training to use power tools to carry out general maintenance and work for CWW. One of the volunteers, the Chair and Public Engagements Officer indicated their interest. It was noted that this would greatly benefit the scope of the work CWW may do and the efficiency of completing tasks.

b) Buchanan Park – Direction sign to town

Stuart confirmed a dialogue with the Coleford Town Council had been opened regarding this item and was to be discussed further prior to the next meeting.

c) Milkwall to Coleford Cycle Track (FODDC Licence)

There is continued maintenance of the cycle track through litter picking, the removal of items of clothing from trees and the scraping back of mud and debris. The Chair informed the group of recent attempts to move back encroaching mud on the Milkwall side of the track, but that this would need to be revisited in warmer weather as the ground was frozen. The Chair advised that she was meeting with a local resident who held a Great Crested Newt Licence to continue the review of what work can be undertaken along this popular track.

ii) Walking routes / guides

The Chair expressed a desire to see a wider range of walks posted to the CWW website and was keen to see this aspect of the group expand in the coming months. Those present were encouraged to put forward walks for inclusion.

iii) PR & Marketing

a) Quiz Trail

Jack has volunteered to continue work on the quiz trail. However, it was acknowledged that he is currently studying for his A level exams and so this may take some time.

b) Walking Trail from Chepstow to Ross via Coleford

Stuart is due to arrange a meeting with Helen from Chepstow Welcomes Walkers to discuss this promising walk promoting & linking the Walkers are Welcome Towns.

iv) Forest of Dean Community Walk

The Chair expressed her immense pleasure at the growing popularity of the walk, with the group regularly containing at least 10 walkers. It was noted that the Community Walk now had an Eventbrite page to increase its publicity.

v) Volunteers

The Chair was pleased to report that CWW has seen an influx in volunteers and now has a healthy bank of volunteers to help in the groups work. It was also agreed that the group should maintain a regular Sunday slot in which committee members, volunteers and members of the public could work together to work on some form of project (with the first being to clean the main park of dirt and debris).

vi) Local photographers / gallery section for CWW website

The gallery section has now been added to the website, with the intention being to showcase local walking sights and upload pictures of footpaths (sectioned by their number).

2. Treasure Report

i) Update on finances

The Chair delivered an update on the finances of the group. £50 from the Build Back Better grant was permitted to be spent on items to enable the clean up of the car park.

3. Members of CWW steering group

i) To clarify roles

Debbie is to remain as Chair, Libby is to be the Public Engagements Officer, Jack is to be the Secretary and Stuart is to remain as a committee member.

ii) To invite interested parties and nearby walking groups to join, as per our new constitution

This idea was enthusiastically agreed as a viable avenue to increase the number of members on the committee; the importance of a varied membership was noted.

4. WaW – Annual report submitted

It was acknowledged that the report had been submitted to the Walkers are Welcome Executive where it was commented that Coleford Welcomes Walkers is a credit to the organisation.

5. Events

i) To consider a schedule of events for the forthcoming year

The chair was keen to try and expand the number of walks and activities provided by CWW beyond the existing Community Walk. There were many people and groups who could be contacted to this end, and it was agreed that this was an excellent idea.

ii) Marketing material – to promote CWW at events and around town

Several different potential marketing strategies and items were discussed (such as bunting and banners) and discussions took place regarding the suitability of some items for indoor and outdoor spaces. The Chair also informed the group that money from the Build Back Better fund needed to be spent soon and that this was an effective avenue to explore while the money was available.

It was noted that the Chair wished for CWW to embrace a wider demographic of people, by working with groups and collaborative efforts. This was warmly received by the committee and an agreement was made to try and connect with a wider range of ethnic backgrounds and minorities such as the Black Girls Hike UK group.

6. Gloucestershire fire and rescues service – local forum

The Chair provided feedback regarding her experiences at this event, including fruitful networking.

7. Anti-social behaviour forum (PRoW vandalism)

The Chair gave a description of the event to the committee, with the matter of graffiti on surrounding Public Rights of Way (particularly on the Coleford to Milkwall cycle track) being discussed. It was agreed this was a matter to explore further.

8. Any other business – to be advised in advance

Anthony (volunteer) advised the group that a member of the Community Walk was well connected with the U3A (a group CWW may be able to partner with) and that this may be useful in their efforts to collaborate.

9. Confirmation of future meeting dates

It was agreed that meeting dates were to be agreed for the entire year rather than just the next meeting, and that the specific dates would be finalised via email.

END