



# THE ICKNIELD WAY ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held in the Davies Memorial Hall, Herringswell, Suffolk on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 4.00 pm.**

*The meeting was preceded by a very well attended public lecture by Dr. David Ratledge on recent historic Lidar discovers in East Anglia.*

**Present:** Tom Chevalier (Chair), Lesley Blundell, Andy Carter, Gil Daly, Alec Gallagher, Alex Goldie, Chris James, Doug Landman, Tim Johnson, Karen Mills, Phil Prigg, Laurence Rix, Helen Smith, Roy Wheeler, Sue Wheeler.

- 1. Welcome by Chairperson.** The Chairperson opened the meeting by welcoming those present to the first face-to-face AGM since 2019.
- 2. Apologies for absence.** Apologies had been received from David Allard, Clive Beckett, Liz Hunter, Maria Nicholson, Jenny Pearce and Chris Stott.
- 3. Officers' reports.** Written reports from the following officers had already been made available on the Association's website via a link circulated to all members.

**a) Chairperson.** Tom Chevalier began by thanking Dr. Ratledge for delivering such an interesting lecture and Doug Landman for organising it and for successfully publicising it to the wider public as well as to Association members. He trusted everyone had enjoyed it as much as he had. He then noted that it was very interesting to return to a face-to-face meeting and morning walk after a gap of several years and suggested that if any member was willing to organise a walk and tea anywhere along the Path during the year then the AGM could be supplemented with 'meet ups' along the route. The Chairperson thanked the wardens and committee members for their work and support during the year and made his regular appeal for volunteers to step forward to join the committee. He noted that the Secretary/Membership Secretary had given notice of her intention to stand-down from her dual role at the 2024 AGM and reiterated his wish to stand down from the Chairmanship.

**b) Treasurer.** Tim Johnson presented his first report as Treasurer. The accounts are presented on a 'cash basis' and at each year end a small number of transactions will be committed but not completed during the year. However, these are generally small in value and do not materially affect the reported financial position. Guidebook sales through the website continue to be the main source of income for the Association, generating a positive surplus for the year and the Association continues to maintain a significant bank balance. Although he was confident that the situation represented in the balance sheet was wholly accurate, David Allard had not yet had chance to examine them. The Secretary noted that David had been the Association's Accounts Examiner for very many years and the Association needed to prepare for the fact he would wish to step down at some point. Alec Gardener stated that he might know someone who would be willing to help and offered to make enquiries. Subject to the ratification of the accounts by the Examiner, their approval was proposed by Chris James, seconded by Roy Wheeler and **agreed unanimously**.

**c) Website and Guidebook sales.** Tom Chevalier updated the meeting on improvements he had made to the three websites he had created and maintained for the Icknield Way Association – one for the walkers' route, one for the riders' route and one for the Great Chalk Way. Facilities on both Icknield Way sites now included a 'join us' feature, a 'news'



section and a 'subscriber' option for non-members. Subscribers could select from an interest in walking, off road cycling and/or equestrian and of the 193 subscribers about one third expressed interest in riding.

Copies of the Walkers Guide are sold through the walkers' website and through a number of large and small wholesale stockists with sales fluctuating during the year. In light of significant increases in printing, packaging, PayPal fees and postal costs over time, the committee had reviewed the sale price, which had remained unchanged for several years. Unfortunately, Royal Mail had increased postage costs almost simultaneously! In 2012 the guidebook was largely rewritten to form a new edition and since then minor changes have been included in successive reprints. However, future route changes will require some redrafting of the maps, which were originally created using defunct software and are now held as image files. He concluded by appealing for a volunteer to take over the role of distributing the Guide.

**d) Membership Secretary.** Lesley Blundell reported that it had been a good year for membership, with 22 people joining since the 2022 AGM. The Association currently had 69 subscribing members, equating to 79 individuals, as some were joint memberships. The total included 15 life members.

**e) Publicity Officer.** Doug Landman reported on his many activities during the year. These had included securing publicity in local newspapers and village newsletters and an appeal for more volunteers via the Community Voluntary Services (CVS) along the route, both of which had proven fruitful. However, the Association still needed volunteers for various posts. Along with the Chairperson and Development Officer he had attended the Joint Local Authority Access Forums (JLAFs) for Central Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire to publicise the IWA and Great Chalk Way, with encouraging results. Visits to other JLAFs along the rest of the route were planned.

In conclusion, 2024 would be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of the IWA and the committee was considering what form the celebrations should take.

**f). The Great Chalk Way.** This had taken up a great deal of the Publicity Officer's time during the year and the project was now nearing completion. The design and production of the information boards had been agreed and some sites and funding secured, though more of both were needed. The launch event was planned for September 2024, on Dunstable Downs.

**4. Election of officers and committee members.** The existing officers and committee members had all agreed to stand for re-election although, as already noted, the Secretary/Membership Secretary had given prior notice of her intention to stand down at the 2024 AGM. Once again, the Tom Chevalier asked for volunteers from the floor to join the Committee, but without success. Proposed by Karen Mills, seconded by Roy Wheeler, all were then elected unanimously.

**5. Appointment of Accounts Examiner.** The treasurer proposed that David Allard again be invited to examine the Association's accounts for the coming year and this was **agreed unanimously**.



## 6. Any Other Business.

a) **Icknield Way milestones.** A website request for a stone mason to clean and restore the milestones along the Path had drawn a response from one stonemason who, having inspected the stones, had submitted a quote for restoring them. A decision on whether to proceed would be taken at the next Executive committee meeting.

b) **Charitable status.** The possibility of acquiring charitable status for the IWA had been considered several times, without reaching a decision. A sub-group of Committee members had now agreed to investigate the requirements and bureaucracy of acquiring such status and to balance these against the benefits.

c) **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.** Roy Wheeler suggested that, to mark the occasion, the 40<sup>th</sup> AGM might be held at Royston Town Hall, where the Icknield Way Association had been launched and a copy of the first minutes publicised. Helen Smith proposed asking *Country Walking* magazine to publish another article on the Icknield Way in the anniversary year, as they had marked the Friends of the Ridgeway's 50<sup>th</sup>. Doug Landman asked for any further suggestions to be sent to him, to take forward. One possibility would be to hold the 40<sup>th</sup> AGM mid-year, rather than in late October, although this would cause difficulties as the accounting year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> August. The Treasurer suggested that one solution would be to hold an EGM mid-year, leaving the AGM in October. Chris James suggested holding a series of meetings at various places along the route during the 40<sup>th</sup> year.

There being no other business, the Chairperson closed the meeting at approximately 5.15 pm.