



THE ICKNIELD WAY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting of the Icknield Way Association, held at the Market Hill Rooms, Royston, on Saturday 19th October 2024 at 3.50pm.

The meeting was preceded by a well-attended presentation by Mary-Ann Ochota (president of the CPRE, author, and broadcaster) entitled "Why Old Paths Matter". Attendees included local MP, Chris Hinchliff, chair of Herts County Council, Terry Douris, and councillors Fiona Hill and Phil Bibby. Representatives of Royston Historical Society, Royston Ramblers, and Ely and District Archaeological Society were also present.

Present: Tom Chevalier (Chairperson), Leslie Abbiss, Lesley Blundell, Andy Carter, Bridget Chevalier, Alan Cooper, Alec Gallagher, Alex Goldie, Liz Hunter, Chris James, Tim Johnson, Doug Landman, Alastair MacEachern, David Northrop, Jenny Pearce, Dave Plummer, James Quantrill, Laurence Rix, Alison Selby, Helen Smith and Ian Thomas,

Tom Chevalier opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and welcoming everyone to the IWA's fortieth AGM. He thanked Helen Smith for making a splendid 40th Anniversary cake.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Phil Prigg, Roy and Sue Wheeler, and Councillor Richard Roberts

2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM

Tom Chevalier highlighted a clarification of the published minutes: David Allard had sent his apologies in advance of the meeting, but sadly subsequently passed away prior to the AGM, although this was not known at the time of the 2023 AGM. Alec Gallagher pointed out that his name was incorrectly recorded as Gardener in the discussion about the Treasurer's report (item 3(b)). Approval of the minutes was then proposed by Alex Goldie and seconded by Chris James and agreed, subject to this correction.

3. Officers' Reports

Written reports from all officers had been made available on the [website](#) ahead of the meeting. The Chair asked that each officer present key highlights only.

Publicity. Doug Landman highlighted the following:

- Most of Doug's time has been focussed on the Great Chalk Way, culminating in the official launch on October 10th. The launch event was a great success and the Media Officer, Mary Tebje, has confirmed a significant level of interest on social media.
- The IWA and the Friends of the Ridgeway are the main players and chief funders of the Great Chalk Way project.
- The strategic focus of the Great Chalk Way, which aligns directly with the stated objectives of the IWA, is to seek National Trail status for both the Icknield Way and the Wessex Ridgeway. This will require political support, and it was good to have Chris Hinchliff MP at the presentation preceding the AGM.
- Doug advised that he had suggested to the IWA Executive Committee that he move into the vacant Development Officer role to pursue this strategic aim, while freeing the Publicity role for someone with more experience of social media.



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Tom Chevalier thanked Doug for all the work he has put into the GCW launch. Doug, in turn, thanked those other members of the committee who have been involved.

Finance. Tim Johnson highlighted the following:

- Before talking to the accounts for year ending 2024, Tim built on the points made by Doug about the Great Chalk Way. The GCW represents the first opportunity we have had in ten years to invest in something that will move us towards our objective of achieving National Trail status for the Icknield Way. We have therefore committed £5,000 of our accumulated funds to support the launch event and signage for the GCW. This expenditure is being made presently and will be reflected in next year's accounts.
- After the expenditure outlined above, the IWA will have accumulated funds of around £7,500 and it is the view of the Executive Committee that up to £5,000 of this should be ring-fenced for activities that will move us towards NT status.
- The accounts for this year will show that we've had a positive year. Net Income is circa £1,000 (£400 from guidebooks, £600 from memberships and bank interest). Expenditure in the year was circa £200. Accumulated funds will, as a result, increase by circa £800. In addition, a further circa £300 of costs for the AGM and associated Cave Tour and Presentation were paid after year end and will show in the 2024/25 accounts.
- The meeting moved, at this point, to agenda item 4 *Approval of Accounts*, minuted below.

Website. Tom Chevalier highlighted the following:

- We continue to maintain three websites and for all three constituencies, (walkers, riders, and cyclists), they remain the best and most up-to-date source of information about the route.
- The websites remain the simplest way for new members to join the association and for anyone to purchase the Guidebook.

Guidebook Sales. Tom Chevalier highlighted the following:

- Sales continue to come in fits and starts, and the overall number of sales has fallen this year.
- A challenge for us currently is how to update the maps in the guidebook. We do not have access to the software in which they were originally created. Andy Carter suggested that he might be able to help with this.

Membership. Lesley Blundell highlighted the following.

- During the year, Lesley attempted to contact all those members whose subscriptions were overdue, and the committee took the decision to remove those who did not respond from the membership list. This exercise has resulted in a fall in the reported number of members. We can, though, be confident that the figures are robust.
- New members have continued to join during the year.
- Sadly, two of our long-standing members, David Allard and Janet Moreton, died during the year.

Chairperson. Tom Chevalier highlighted the following:

- Tom thanked the Wardens for all their work, saying that it is vital that we ensure that the route remains walkable.
- Tom thanked the Committee for their hard work.



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- It was important that the 40th anniversary AGM be held in Royston, the place where the IWA was born. Next year's AGM will be held somewhere along the southern stretch of the path.
- It would be great if any member wanted to arrange a walk in spring or early summer.

4. Approval of the Accounts

Following the Finance update recorded above, the meeting was asked to approve the accounts subject to independent review. Proposed by Alec Gallagher and seconded by Alex Goldie, the accounts were approved subject to review by an Independent Examiner.

5. Executive Committee Membership

Tom Chevalier outlined the following changes and proposed changes to membership of the committee:

- Tom thanked Clive Beckett for his work as Development Officer and noted that Clive has resigned from this role.
- Tom thanked Lesley Blundell for her work as Secretary and reminded the meeting that Lesley had announced at the 2023 AGM that she would step away from this role. Lesley will continue to serve as Membership Secretary.
- He then advised that Laurence Rix had offered to take on the role of Secretary. Proposed by Lesley Blundell and seconded by Tim Johnson, Laurence's appointment was approved.
- Prior to the meeting, Alastair MacEachern had offered to help build a social media presence for the association. Proposed by Tom Chevalier and seconded by Doug Landman, Alastair's secondment to the committee was approved with a precise role to be agreed.
- All existing members of the committee had made it known to Tom that they were prepared to continue in post.

The current makeup of the committee is, therefore: Tom Chevalier (Chairperson), Lesley Blundell (Membership Secretary), Chris James (Newsletter), Tim Johnson (Treasurer), Doug Landman (Development Officer), Alastair MacEachern, Maria Nicholson, Laurence Rix (Secretary). Proposed by Andy Carter and seconded by Liz Hunter, the committee membership was approved.

6. Appointment of Accounts Examiner

Tim Johnson advised that the association has been without an account's examiner since the death of David Allard. One of our members, Jenny Pearce, has recommended her son to us for the role. Jonathan Whitman is a chartered accountant and has discussed the role with us. He is happy to take it on. Proposed by Tim Johnson and seconded by Laurence Rix, his appointment was approved.

7. AOB

- Ian Thomas advised that the Royston Ramblers have placed a bench on the Icknield Way in memory of David Allard. It was agreed that a photograph and accompanying news article should be created for our newsletter.



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- Doug Landman expressed the view that Professor Thurstan Shaw would have been proud to know that the IWA was still active 40 years after he initiated it.

There being no other business, the Chairperson closed the meeting at approximately 5.00pm.