

**MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DALES
WAY ASSOCIATION**

This meeting took place on **Sunday 27th April, 2003** at 1.30pm at Linton Village Hall.

Present: Colin Speakman, Dave Smith, Douglas Cossar, Chris Musson, Alan Sutcliffe, Alex McManus, Pauline Robertshaw, Margaret & Ken Staines, Pat & Geoff. Hickman and Eileen & Brendan Walsh.

1. **Apologies** from Brian Robertshaw.
2. **Minutes** of the 2002 AGM were agreed to be a true record.
3. **Arising from the AGM Minutes.** The Harvey Strip Map has now been revised and published.
4. **The Minutes** of the last ordinary meeting (9th March, 2003) were considered. There are three amendments as follows: 1) Web Site: The name Simon Shaw is incorrect and should read Simon Fern. 2) Congratulations for the Handbook should have gone to Douglas Cossar. 3) Footpath: South Lakeland should have been included for a meeting.
5. There was no further business to discuss from the ordinary meeting.
6. **President's report:** In the absence of the President, Frank Sanderson, Colin Speakman presented a report on the past year. Only just over a year ago there were still some paths closed due to the Foot & Mouth epidemic. Since then things have changed and we have all come back to life and are back on route. Since the Re-launch we have reaped the rewards regarding membership, it has been a great success, especially with the Accommodation Providers.

It is pleasing to see how well we are recognised by the Park Authorities. The Dales Way walkers, both day walkers and those walking the full distance help greatly with the economy of the Dales and Lakes. We feel we are partners working to the same end. Colin thanked everyone for good and lively committee meetings and also for their input. Three new committee members have joined this year and the balance has been restored since the Jamieson's left. Colin welcomed the new members.

He said our members' handbook is an outstanding publication, there are not many organisations who have such an excellent handbook full of useful information.

At this point Colin passed the meeting to David Smith for any comments.

It was noted that the biggest problem for the accommodation providers is that most of them set off on a Saturday, saturating the B & B's on the same nights.

David commented that amendments to the handbook were a problem and unless he is informed of any changes it does not get picked up immediately. With regard to transport changes, Alan Sutcliffe will provide these. Douglas asked for copies of amendments. David noted this, but amendments are an ongoing problem and are difficult to keep up with.

7. **Officers Reports:**

Sales: Rita Smith is very committed to Sales. She is doing a good job and is very efficient. She is very happy to sell direct to passing trade. David stays as first contact and receives the orders and cheques, and posts orders to Rita about once a week. Sales are slow at present but it is early in the season. It is difficult to tell how well we are doing, but we are definitely making a small profit. We are also providing a service to the members. We hold a large stock which is unavoidable due to the large range of items we sell.

Footpath: Pat has had no reports of any difficulties or obstructions. There is no news from the National Park regarding Back Lane, Grassington. It would make a much more direct route for the Dales Way, but as it is not shown on the definitive map it could take some time for the authorities to organise. Pat will contact the Parks authority again.

Farfields Meeting House have erected a notice. We do not yet know what is on it, we are hoping the Association is mentioned as we donated money towards the erection of a stile. There is to be an official opening, David will represent the Association.

Way marking: Even though there are a lot of way marks on the Dales Way, it is inadequate. Some way marks are not in obvious places or vegetation has grown round others. Yorkshire Dales are putting up signs, but they are not very consistent, there are big gaps without any. Way marking is needed in both directions. We need to press the Authorities to carry on. Kendal Ramblers will help in their area. Finger post would be more ideal in specific places. We cannot erect finger posts ourselves but should press the National Park Authorities to install finger posts with the Dales Way on. We could put some of our funds towards this. There are many inexperienced walkers doing the Dales Way so we should make sure it is way marked correctly. In particular there is a problem with the north end of the Dales and the area in between the two National Parks. It needs way marking properly and not in bits. It needs to be of National Trail standard. Pat will write to the National Parks. We need to make it top priority for this year.

Douglas commented the Gemmel/Speakman guide will be out of print this year. It was suggested committee members walk sections to check the guide ready for re-print. Douglas was asked to mastermind this. Colin has donated his portion of the Royalties to the Association.

Membership & Finance: David Smith reported that Membership has built up over the years. There are now 490 members. Every year we gain some and lose some. Half our members are long term members, it is very pleasing that they support our efforts. Membership subscription is only £4 and there are no plans to increase this. 194 members use Bankers Orders.

The Accounts for the last financial years 2002/2003 were professionally audited on 15th April. However due to the early date of the AGM (and Easter) the official report has not yet been received. Copies will be available very shortly to forward to Members on request. It will be featured in the Autumn Newsletter.

A draft of the accounts is presented to the AGM. Whereas the official report will differ from this in detail, the main figures are substantially correct and give an accurate indication of the position over the last financial year.

As anticipated, the very high cost of our efforts to re-establish the Dales Way after foot and mouth have led to an overall loss over the period. The relaunch costs were over

£2,000 which roughly wipes out the surplus achieved in a normal year. Comparable figures to the year before appear in the Income & Expenditure Account – although bear in mind that the previous year was not normal. The relaunch costs were the design and printing of a new Dales Way leaflet and two relaunch events at Bolton Abbey. Our loss over the year amounted to £910 compared to a profit of over £1,000 the previous year which was itself depressed due to foot and mouth. This loss was expected and we anticipate returning to previous levels of surplus this year and into the future – subject to any significant contributions to the development of the Dales Way itself. The only expected increase for the future is postage due to greater postal charges. Despite the deficit over the last year, the financial situation remains sound with well over £8,000 in our Bank Accounts.

8. Election of Officers and Committee:

Colin read out the list of Committee members for the benefit of those who did not know people. Everyone agreed to stand again. Colin asked for help on the Committee. Alex MacManus volunteered to be a Committee member. Colin thanked everyone for standing again.

9. Any Other Business:

A basic **Web Site** has been set out. It is already there but there is nothing on it yet. Simon Fern is running a successful business in the Dales and is very busy. David will arrange to meet with him. We are expecting an Electronic version of the handbook, although some things will be linked to the Web. David will give the details to Simon somehow to enable him to work on it. It will take quite some time before we are up and running properly. It will be complementary to the one run by Simon Pitts, a commercial one. He has no objections. Chris Musson has offered to keep it up to date once it is running.

Interpretation Boards: Margaret & Ken have had an interesting meeting with Alan Hulme at YDNP regarding interpretation boards. It is possible we could get a good grant from their Sustainable Development Fund. It was agreed in principle and Colin agreed to fill in the Grant form and Margaret & Ken could then take it further.

10. Date and time of next Committee Meeting: Sunday 13th July, 2003 at 67 Grove Road, Ilkley at 1.30pm.

There being no further business Colin thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 3.40pm. Refreshments were served.