

# The Watercress Way

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

7:30pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021

At the Garden, Alresford Station



This meeting reports on the period from June 2020 until June 2021.

The 11 Trustees are the only members of The Watercress Way. Members of the public are invited as observers.

**Attending:** Jackie Porter, Jim Thompson, Kim Adams, Mike Collis, Tony Langridge, Julie Fullstone, Lynsey Robinson, Chris Brunskill, Stephen Jeffery

**Observers:** Chris Cornell, Dawn Cornell, Bob Barnham, Steve Morley, Adam Maskill

**Apologies:** Clive Cook (Trustee), Emma Banks (Trustee), Caroline Blatchford, Sarah Banks

We started with an introductory talk from Kim Adams ably assisted by Chris Cornell about the importance of the Alresford location and the development of the Watercress Line.

The line closed in 1973 and immediately a group of volunteers formed to keep the line open. In 1977 trains first ran between Alresford and Ropley. Later the line was extended as far as Alton. The Watercress connection was highlighted by the fact that it was loaded onto trains in the adjacent sidings.

The Watercress Way became a possibility after the "Straight Mile" in Martyr Worthy was designated as a footpath in 2012/13. A public meeting was held in Autumn of 2015 leading to the formation of the charity in 2016. A lot of progress has been made and this is our 5<sup>th</sup> AGM.

**1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 16 June 2020:** Minutes agreed and signed by the Chairman

**Matters arising:** None

**2. Meet the Trustees:** Chairman Jackie Porter introduced the trustees and welcomed new trustees Chris Brunskill, Julie Fullstone and Lynsey Robinson. She thanked retiring Treasurer Kay Mead for her highly valued contribution.

Trustees outlined their roles and experience. In particular Chris brings IT and website management experience, Julie has an accounting background and is our new Treasurer and Lynsey is an Ecologist who has invaluable knowledge. Emma Banks, who was unable to be present, brings excellent skills in fundraising and promotion.

**3. Report from Chairman:**

- **Annual report: Progress so far and plans for 2021 – 22**

- Jackie talked about the difficulties faced over the last year due to the covid pandemic and reduced opportunities for activities due to lockdowns.
- All Trustee meetings were done on Zoom and have been very successful. Using social media we have been able to recruit 4 new trustees who augment the skills of the team.

- Walking has been an important part of peoples daily exercise and we have successfully promoted the use of the trail and updated many of the walks on the website including the 8 walk challenge to cover the whole trail.
- We updated our Strategic Plan and shared it with over 20 local councils and organisations
- We have continued to review planning applications and maintained dialogue with landowners
- Ash die-back is an issue on parts of the route and we have liaised with HCC
- We have started volunteering activities and guided walks as lockdown guidance has permitted

**4. Report from Treasurer:** The accounts were prepared by Kay Mead. Julie presented the accounts on her behalf.

- **Accounts to year end April 2021**

This proved to be an unusual year because of the difficulty in raising new funds resulting in the charity making a small loss.

Income was down and consisted of:-

Restricted income: £500 received from Hellards Estate Agent. This is a donation toward the cost of producing a pocket guidebook to the Watercress Way.

Online donations £243.77. We received £54.80 from Local Giving. We also received £188.90 from Give As You Live, the donation service which donates when a supporter purchases goods on the internet – if we could attract a few more GAYL supporters this could become a good income stream.

Other donations £405. This is from local business sponsorship for which we are very grateful.

Expenditure is down from last year at £1913.58. The largest item is for work on Projects, and most of this is for costs related to posts and waymarkers.

- **Current funds:** Fundraising through events restarted in June 2021.

The bank balance is currently £8,791.14

**5. Public Question Time:** Adam Maskill is an arboriculturist working for HCC. He observed that due to the line only being closed in 1973 there are no trees identified as ancient or veteran. However, there are some nearby to the trail. He offered to assist in identifying interesting trees on or near The Watercress Way.

**6. Date of next meeting:** 16 June 2022

**Mike Collis**

**Secretary, The Watercress Way**

**30 June 2021**