

A COVENTRY WAY ASSOCIATION – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 5TH DECEMBER 2017

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- Venue** King Henry VIII School, Classroom in Swimming Pool Building.1
- Present** R Brown, R Carey, T Cornfoot, B Eve, J Green, N Meynell, P Page, B Roebuck, R Rainsley, B Swain, F Tonkinson, A Townsend, S Veasey, A Wade.
- Apologies** J Aylmer, R Brandon, K Nicholas, D Shelton, R Watson.
- 7.00pm** Chairman John Green welcomed the attendees, including Simon Holloway, and thanked them all for their attendance. He also thanked Anne Wade for arranging the venue again. He went on to report that “profits” from The Cyril Bean Coventry Way Challenge 2017 had enabled the Association to make donations to a number of charities. He thought it fitting that a representative of one of those charities be invited along this evening, to tell us about their activities. With that he introduced the guest speaker, Janet McConkey, from The Coventry Children’s Boot Fund.
- 7.05pm** Janet presented an interesting insight into the history of The Coventry Children’s’ Boot Fund, which was founded, over a hundred years ago, by George Gibson, a teacher at South Street School, in Hillfields. She explained why there was still the need for such a fund today. In the last 12 months the fund has made 483 awards. Many questions were raised following Janet’s 20 minute presentation and an ACWA cheque was presented to the fund.
- A short refreshment break ensued.**
- 7:45pm** **A.G.M. commenced.**
- Minutes of AGM 2016** The minutes were not available.
- Chairman’s Report** 2017 has been another successful year for the Association in carrying out our aims. Early in January we were informed that an unsafe bridge on the Kenilworth Greenway had forced the closure of part of the Way. With assistance from Warwickshire CC and the Coventry and Solihull Footpath Teams we were able to find a solution to this problem (see also the Working Party Report). Then about two weeks before The Challenge, we were advised by Kenilworth Golf Club that their competitions on the Challenge Sunday would render the path across the course extremely dangerous to users. Once again, we rose to the occasion and a diversion was put in place for the day. Further along the route, a new check point had been found in Brinklow, at the Scout Hut and this proved a great success. Our route is also affected by the gravel extraction between Ryton and Wolston. This will be an ongoing problem for several years, but will be handled successfully. I say this with confidence, due to the excellent work carried out by our members/volunteers, who commit themselves to the monthly Working Parties. This ensures that many local public footpaths are kept open and, by doing so, gain the respect this Association receives from Local Councils, Landowners and Farmers.
- In closing, I am delighted to express my gratitude to all for their good work, which has ensured that the Association has met the wishes of our founder, Cyril Bean, to make Public Footpaths readily available in and around Coventry.

JOHN GREEN

Secretary's Report

Secretarial duties continue to be minimal; no correspondence having been received by me. However, thank you notes have been received by the Chairman, from all the charities who have received donations from us this year. In my role as Challenge Entry Co-ordinator, I was informed by Runners World that they were changing their service provider. I felt that their replacement system didn't meet our needs, so, in consultation with the Challenge Committee, I sought out alternative suppliers. The only viable alternative found was SiEntries, which was already used by several of our members, so we took the plunge! Based on the rapid uptake of places for the 2018 Challenge, this has turned out to be a good decision, thus far. It has also cut down on the administrative duties required from me.

KEN NICHOLAS (added after meeting)

Treasurer's Report

We hold our funds in the Santander Bank and the Coventry Building Society, plus a small cash float. This year our total funds have increased by over £2,200 from £14,713.78 to £16,989. The increase is not quite genuine! The main reason for the increase is the massive uptake of for the 2018 Challenge, with £2,500 already taken.

Book sales have increased a little, from under £400 to over £650.

Santander interest added up to just £20 over the year, while CBS was an even more miserly £7.

The 2017 Challenge made a smaller profit this year, so we have increased the entry fee for 2018.

There was still enough profit to support the following charities:

- £100 to Myaware
- £100 to Warks and Northants Air Ambulance
- £100 to Myton Hospice
- £100 each to 11th & 74th Coventry Scouts
- £100 to Mary's Meals
- £100 to Coventry Children's Boot Fund
- £75 to Brinklow Scouts
- £50 to Barnacle Village Hall.

I would like to thank all members of the Association who have made my work easier, by providing promptly any information on invoices and receipts, etc.

Lastly, a big thank you to Bob Rainsley for auditing the accounts.

JOHN AYLNER (via written report)

The meeting queried the reported donation to charities of £825, whilst the Balance Sheet showed £880. Bob Rainsley to investigate.

Working Parties

This last year of working parties was very similar to that of the previous one, with both Warwickshire and Solihull councils being forced to cut back on their spending. The result being that over the entire year we were not able to install any gates or bridges, so our working parties had to be confined to path clearance and improvements where possible.

Early in January we were informed by a walker that a bridge over the Greenway had been declared unsafe to walk under. A quick visit to the site proved this to be correct as there

were barriers across the Greenway displaying warning notices not to walk through the bridge. So, with the annual Challenge event due in April, it was obvious that we needed a change of route. After a couple of visits to the site with some of our members we decided that we could use a path from Hodgets Lane, used in our Walk 3, which meets up with the Greenway a hundred or so yards further along from the offending bridge. It was decided that we needed to construct a flight of steps down what could be a slippery slope onto the Greenway to make this diversion safer. I made a phone call to WCC to get permission to do this which was rather cautiously given. It appears that steps are a hazard according to the WCC health and safety people.

So, in early February, our first working party of the year was at this site, where half of the party constructed the steps, while the other half were attempting to improve the underfoot conditions of the path which was in some places a complete quagmire. Another WP a week later continued with this work with a considerable amount of ditch digging as well as path clearing. Over the next nine months we made another four visits to the path each time doing more digging and building up the height of the path. The last visit just last month (November) showed that we had made considerable improvements over the year and the path was now dry pretty much over the whole length. Phil Prosser came along on that day with his new boss and both were keen to arrange for some stone to make the path even better. Phil has since phoned me and is hoping to arrange this for a February WP in 2018.

In March, at the request of Phil, we worked at the Lavender Hall Fisheries where we re installed two stiles that had been ripped out by vandals. Concrete used in the original installation proved very difficult to overcome and we had to re install the stile closer to the bridge than they had been before. We thought this a better option as it made them "sheep proof". However, you can never please everyone as a couple of weeks later an E mail was received via the web site from a local dog walker who said he could no longer take his dog through the stiles. I got in touch with him and we arranged a meet up on site where between us we installed a couple of trap doors for the dog to walk through. He went away happy.

In July we went over to Bretford to clear the "Behind the hedge" route which is used both on A Coventry Way and on Walk 10. One of our members, Trevor Cornfoot informed us that this was badly overgrown when he and his "Breakfast Club" gang were overseeing their Walk 10. The battery hedge trimmers and the newly re instated petrol trimmer ably operated by Bob Rainsley proved their worth on this job. We left it a very wide and walkable stretch of footpath. Only problem is that this is a job that we will need to do every year before the Challenge at the very least. Always a problem with enclosed paths.

Also in July, we cleared two paths that had been reported as blocked by a young lady walker using our 21 Walks book. These paths were both on Walk 18, one approaching Corley Rocks and the other alongside the old open air school at Corley. The path approaching Corley Rocks was completely blocked, and once again highlighted the problems with enclosed paths. The second path was also enclosed, but not as badly overgrown as the first. We intended to repair a broken stile just beyond the enclosed path, but ran out of time and so left it for another time.

August saw us trying to clear another enclosed path on Walk 16 just past Keresley Village. We had cleared this the year before at the request of Simon Holloway of Coventry CC. Unfortunately, not too long after we started, I disturbed a wasp nest with the hedge trimmer. They were not happy at all, and I had to approach the 200mts world record time

while sprinting up the road trying to get away from them. The end result was that we had to eventually abandon this clearance, and Simon came along and closed the path off, and called for the pest control people to come along and deal with the wasps. Three of us then went over to Corley School again and repaired the stile that we had left last time out.

Our WP in October saw us at the request of WCC clearing a path near to Tantara Lodge. This path is not one we use in our 21 Walks book, but as WCC requested we do it anyway. It gave us the chance to try out some new cutters for the petrol strimmer, and they proved to be very good. These new cutters enable us to use the strimmer “legally” and keep us covered by the insurance that WCC provide. We were not strictly legal using the metal “bush cutter” that we had used previously. While there, John Green brought along a young lady who was working with the City of Culture Bid Team. She explained to us while we had out “T Break” the benefits of winning the bid. Hopefully we will be hearing a positive result this coming Thursday.

November saw us making our last visit of the year to the “Hodgetts Lane” path, as mentioned in the first paragraph. Our first working party in 2018 will hopefully be to “firm up” the path with stone.

In summary, with the exception of the job at Tantara Lodge, all of this year’s working parties were of our own instigation. This is also likely to be the case next year, unless more money is allowed to the three councils and we can be doing some more constructive work.

BOB CAREY

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All Officers have agreed to stand again in 2018, except for Peter Page. Peter intends to withdraw from all his activities within the Association throughout 2018. Ken Nicholas requests to have the title of Challenge Event Co-ordinator (**Secretary** – *the actual request was Challenge Entry Coordinator. The Event is coordinated by the Challenge Committee*). Ken has also suggested that there is no requirement for the role of Secretary. Peter Page objected to this, stating there was always a need for a Secretary. The meeting agreed that the Committee would decide. (**Secretary** – *This was a misinterpretation of my request. I had said that there was no longer a need for a separate Membership Secretary and this role could be merged into the Secretary role. The Challenge Entry Coordinator title would then supersede the Membership Secretary title.*)

Committee:

Chairman	John Green
Secretary	Ken Nicholas
Treasurer	John Aylmer
Working Party Co-ordinator	Bob Carey
Member	Bob Brandon

Other Specific duties:

Auditor	Bob Rainsley
Challenge Entry Coordinator	Ken Nicholas
Webmaster	Peter Page
Challenge Committee	Bob Brandon, Anne Wade, Bob Carey, Ken Nicholas.
Geocaching	Keith Greenall
Book Sales	John Green

Challenge Report

The 2017 Challenge was held on Sunday 9th April. The event was a great success, thanks to the efforts of many volunteers before and on the day itself. Thanks are due to Caroline & Lawrence at The Queen's Head, in Meriden, for allowing us to host the event at the pub yet again.

The event is well documented on ACW website. The day was sunny from dawn to dusk.

251 started (228 in 2016)

222 completed the circuit (195 in 2016)

There were 10 relay teams (11 in 2016)

The quickest time was recorded by two Challengers – 6 hours 17 minutes.

Many complements were received regarding the Start, Checkpoints and Finish – particularly regarding the friendliness and encouragement experienced by those taking part. Food at the end was provided by The Jacket Potato Box.

Preparations are well in hand for 2018 – April 8th. Caroline & Lawrence are prepared to host the event, at The Queen's Head, again. Bubbenhall Village Hall has been booked, as have Wolston Community Sports & Leisure Centre and the Brinklow Scout Hall. The Jacket Potato Box has also been booked again.

In the new year, the toilets will be booked and volunteers will be contacted, to ensure that the Start, Checkpoints and Finish are well manned.

Entries are well advanced towards the 250 limit.

BOB BRANDON

Book Sales

This year, following very successful Godiva Festival and Fargo Village days, has seen a need to reprint the "21 Circular Walks" book. With the knowledge of the inevitable footpath changes occurring, a decision was taken to only order 150 books. Within days, a phone call was received, from Kenilworth Books, asking for a small delivery. This was quickly followed by a gentleman reporting that Brandon Marsh Centre did not have any copies. Trips to Coventry Tourist Office, Coombe Abbey Visitors Centre, Brandon Marsh Centre and Kenilworth Books has resulted in us holding just 20 books in stock. This, I feel, will suffice until nearer the Godiva Festival 2018.

JOHN GREEN

A.O.B.

Overseers were requested to survey their walks during January, with the emphasis on "A Coventry Way" – John Green to action. The Challenge Green Books will go to print in February, thus the importance of the Overseers' reports.

Concern was voiced over the size of the bank balance. The meeting agreed that the Committee would review the position, whilst bearing in mind the financial constraints being placed on the three councils. Thought to be given to ACWA purchasing kissing gates and way mark posts, which would still need council/landowners' permission.

Information was received that the Coventry Footpath Team will move shortly, from The Grange to Whitley Depot, where storage will be limited. Therefore, if ACWA require any "furniture" and can store it, then delivery can be arranged.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.