

**Minutes of the Step out Sheffield AGM 2023
at 1.30pm on Monday 22nd May 2023
Committee Room, Victoria Hall, Norfolk Street S1 2JB**

In attendance: 44 Volunteer Walk Leaders:

Dorien Brookes	DB	VWL Chairman
Lucia Contrino	LC	VWL
Sue Lee	SL	VWL Ramblers Wellbeing Walks SOS Coordinator
Francis Feeley	FF	VWL
Dan Murphy	DM	VWL Database Manager
Tony Oxley	TO	VWL Safety Officer
Bernadette Parsons	BP	VWL
Nigel Ross	NR	VWL Treasurer
Kath Williams	KW	VWL Secretary

Denise Altoft	Beryl Bonet	Pete Claxton	Terrance Cook
Audrey Crowder	Ken Crowder	Barbara Dixon	Sue Douglas
Steve Drabble	Pam Elkid	Val Ellis	Gavin Ewan
Diz Feeley	Jennie Fulleylove	Arthur Gilpin	Maralyn Guthrie
Alan Hardy	Sally Heseltine	Margaret Hibberd	Janet Hilbert
Pat Langford	Nadir Neciri	Liz Palmer	Michael Pass
Linda Poore	Julie Roberts	Bea Rushforth	Sheila Sale
Pamela Sawyer	John Scott	Elaine Shaw	Mike Stern
Susan Stone	Sue Tevendale	Christine Towers	
and retired VWL Gill Stern			

1) Welcome and introductions

DB welcomed everyone to the 6th Annual General Meeting of Step Out Sheffield and thanked those present for attending.

2) Apologies

The following 50 people presented their apologies.

Jude Alabaster	Brenda Anderson	Joy Barlow	Richard Bennett
Anne Booker	Alan Broadhead	Jackie Broadhead	Pat Brown
Derek Capes	Alec Cartwright	Sharon Cassinelli	David Chester
Hazel Chilton	June Claxton	Kath Craig	Caroline Dabinett
Mary Dakin	Geoff Day	John Eaton	Pam Eaton
Jean Fawkes	Ian Goodlad	Pat Goodlad	John Gosling
Sue Gosling	Peter Griffin	Sheila Harris	Janet Harrison
Anne Huggins	Margaret Jackson	Marie-Louise Maxey	Fran Laws
Chris Morris	Marjorie Morris	Heather Naylor	Gill O'Mahoney
Will O'Mahoney	Maggie Richardson	Frank Shaw	John Sulley

Glenys Swift	Jim Swift	Kelly Turner	Mary Uhlar
John Ward	Lynda Wardle	Robert Wardle	Lesley Webster
Howard Winwood	Sheila Winwood		

3) Break for lunch refreshments and informal discussions

4) Presentation of certificates Photographer Tony Oxley

The following VWLs had been awarded certificates:

For 10 years service:

Crystal Peaks	Maralyn Guthrie, Pat Scholey
Ecclesall Woods	Mary Dakin, Jean Fawkes, Mike Stern
Gleadless	Anna Scislowska
Grenoside	Lynda Wardle, Robert Wardle
Hackenthorpe	Sheila Winwood
Handsworth	Elaine Shaw, Frank Shaw
Hillsborough	June Claxton
Norfolk Park	Sally Heseltine
Richmond	Sharon Cassinelli, Margaret Jackson
Stocksbridge	Ann Firth, Aurea Moss
Totley	Alison Harries, Celia Naisby
Multiple walks	Sue Lee

For 20 years service:

Grenoside	Jim Swift
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For 500+ walks:

Totley	Sheila Harris
WDC	Mike Stern

For 750+ walks:

Ecclesfield	Graham Matthews
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For 1000+ walks:

Stannington	Nigel Ross
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For 2,000+ walks:

Various walks	Sue Lee
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Not all VWLs were at the AGM to receive their certificates so these were to be presented by SL when she visited their walks. Also, 45 certificates had been produced for walkers who had attended walks regularly for more than 10 years and Beryl Bonet was presented with hers at the AGM whilst others were to be given out on walks by SL. This was a positive reflection of how well SOS retains walkers.

5) Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM held on 16th May 2022

The minutes of the 2022 AGM were circulated to members on 26th April 2023 and again on 10th May 2023. There being no questions or comments raised after either circulation, DB read out the motion **‘that the Minutes of the AGM held on 16th May 2022 be formally adopted by Step Out Sheffield’**. This was proposed by Beryl Bonet and seconded by Gavin Ewan. No-one voted against the motion and there were no abstentions, so it was carried unanimously.

6) **Presentation of the Step out Sheffield Chairman's 2022-2023 Annual Report**

The Annual Report by DB had been circulated to all members ahead of the AGM, in addition he expressed a huge 'Thank you' to all VWLs and said how important it was to help Sheffielders get out into their surroundings to exercise in an atmosphere of camaraderie. There being no questions, SL proposed **'that the Annual Report for 2022-2023 be formally adopted by Step out Sheffield'**. The motion was seconded by Linda Poore. No-one voted against the motion and there were no abstentions, so it was carried unanimously.

7) **Presentation of the Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report**

Copies of the account summary and the Financial Report for 2022-2023 had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting. NR announced he was retiring as Treasurer after 7 years in the post, so this was his final report. The full accounts were available to volunteers on request. NR reported another good year in financial terms due to 'Ward Pot' grants and receipts for medical student community placements, though these were less this year as only 3 not 4 medical students attending at £2,500 per placement. This all meant that the financial year 2022-202 ended well ahead of budget again with a final balance of £44,142.52. He said fundraising was made easy because Step Out Sheffield (SOS) had such a good walking experience to offer people and thanked the VWLs for delivering the service so well. Following payments to local walking groups and sundry expenses the most recent bank balance was £41,707.65, an enormous contrast to when the Walking for Health scheme in Sheffield became volunteer-led in 2016 with literally nothing in the bank account. DR thanked NR for his outstanding help to SOS over the years and everyone applauded appreciatively.

The motion **'that the Treasurer's Report for 2022-2023, together with the summary accounts for the same period, be formally adopted by Step out Sheffield'** was proposed by Alan Hardy seconded by Tony Oxley. No-one voted against the motion and there were no abstentions, so it was carried unanimously.

8) **Package to help local walk groups become financially autonomous**

As well as local walking groups that had to receive monies from SOS to help pay their weekly room hire expenses, some other groups had recently expressed an interest in managing their own finances by forming a local committee and opening a bank account. Ken Crowder of Hackenthorpe and Owlthorpe group, that already had a bank account, asked what the rules were. NR explained that to keep funding fairly distributed, all local groups with a bank account would receive £500 in the 2023-24 financial year. All SOS walks were encouraged to open a bank account if they wished to take advantage of this arrangement. FF pointed out the plus side of having finances to spend on activities the group wished, that would benefit all their local walkers. NR had kindly prepared three documents to assist with opening a bank account. These had been circulated with the AGM Agenda: Generic Bank instructions from Metro Bank, Generic Constitution, Generic Minutes. Pam Sawyer had reported Wisewood recently followed these guidelines and the whole process with the bank had gone smoothly and only taken two hours. Once a group had opened a bank account they could apply for Ward Pot funding or Charitable Trust grants for social walking activities like trips. Although he would no longer be Treasurer NR offered to help with such future applications. If a local group was faced with new expenses for room hire they should tell the next Treasurer who would arrange to pay the accommodation bills until a bank account was set up. SOS could not pay a local walking group their £500 until bank account details were received. Cheques were the favoured

method of payment as BACS charges currently applied to the SOS bank account, though this could be reviewed for ease of payments in future. Whilst recognising that some local groups were small in size, NR urged this was an opportunity to think outside the box, to increase community spirit through walking activities and this was appreciated by all present.

Although some local groups did not yet have a Constitution, NR explained such documents were straightforward and how the group operated was covered by Terms of Reference which could be evolved by each walk. Based on the experience of the Dore group, KW said that, like expenditure, each group could decide their own Constitution and may like to include paying for insurance under Powers, so as to buy cover for walking trips. Equally there may be a need to include the power to employ people, say like a caterer. Under Finance, Dore had stipulated that the group should ensure that its accounts were audited or independently examined each year. LC, Chairman of the Dore group, said they were fortunate to have quite a number of walkers to help form a local committee but, even so, it had been hard work to set up a new walking group from scratch that had to pay weekly room hire costs. She had concerns about smaller walking groups not finding it easy to have enough willing volunteers to form a committee, though one definite advantage would be to apply for Ward Pot funding or grants in future.

9) Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Report 2022-23

SL presented her report and explained the situation regarding Ramblers Wellbeing Walks (RWW). SOS had been with the Ramblers since 2012 when they took over the administration of what was then called Walking for Health. The recent rebranding to RWW hadn't changed anything on the ground, walks were still as Dr William Bird had envisaged 24 years ago. As exemplified by the certificate presentation, the walks had been so popular over the years that some people had walked for over 10 years and 109 VWLs had served for 10 years or more. One leader, Jim Swift had now been volunteering regularly for 20 years. SL thanked all the VWLs for their support, time and dedication for sustaining the health walk scheme. In South Yorkshire there were now 4 RWW schemes, Sheffield being by far the biggest and the only one volunteer led. Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster Councils all currently funded their scheme coordinators.

In answer to the question why stay with Ramblers, SL explained that, despite the problems with the phone app registration system that had led to its abandonment, Ramblers had listened to the concerns expressed and had agreed to our reverting to paper registers. The other main reason was insurance cover. Under the Ramblers policy all VWLs were covered by third party insurance for up to £10 million, plus Personal Accident Insurance (provided the VWL is under 90 years old). If we were not with Ramblers we would have to find another underwriter for this level of cover and they would probably require evidence of VWLs having received accredited training, factors which taken together might prove prohibitively expensive.

SL closed her remarks by thanking all those who had completed and returned the Quarter 4 registers in good time for compilation of the year end walking statistics. She would soon be visiting each walk again to collect the Q1 figures and to give out updated Q2 registers. She would also listen to any suggestions about improving the system.

SL was thanked by DB for all her hard work ensuring delivery of another successful year's walking programme.

The motion ‘**that the RWW Report for 2022-2023 be formally adopted by Step out Sheffield**’ was proposed by Sue Douglas seconded by Alan Hardy. No-one voted against the motion and there were no abstentions, so it was carried unanimously.

10) Safety Report

SL was pleased to report that there had been no safety incidents in 2022-23 and congratulated the VWLs for this good level of care. However, vigilance was still of prime importance as accidents could always happen and there had already been 2 safety incidents in 2023-24.

11) Discussion about the future development of Step Out Sheffield

DB led the discussion by thanking the VWLs for the suggestions they had made at the March Pie and Peas networking event. Many of these ideas had also been picked up in research by the two psychology students who had attended several walks that month and written a well referenced 9 page report (available from Secretary, KW on request) giving the psychological basis for recruiting and retention techniques. This work had added to similar research carried out by medical students on placement.

Unsurprisingly it had been found that most VWLs were well over 70 years old, so SL and DB had been busy trying to motivate walkers to become walk assistants and then train to be a VWL. Some walks found it challenging to find enough VWLs, so it was hoped that a handful of VWLs could be persuaded to become local hubs to help arrange cover when a regular walk leader was not available, each looking after several walks in this way. For this to work well it would need some VWLs to be prepared to help out on neighbouring walks from time to time and DB was going to encourage people to do this, to make the most of existing resources.

Whilst word of mouth continued to be a good way of attracting people to the walks, members of the SOS Committee had drafted a new publicity leaflet which was nearly ready for printing. SL circulated a walk photograph taken in Endcliffe Park by TO and it was generally agreed it would make a good picture for the cover. In the near future VWLs and walkers would be asked for help in distributing these to GP surgeries, pharmacies, local libraries etc.

DB envisaged a 10 year programme in which SOS would gradually grow to give an even more extensive service to all parts of the city for the next generation of Sheffielders who need encouragement to walk for exercise.

12) Election of Committee (Maximum 10 seats)

DB explained that three Management Committee members were retiring so could anyone interested in helping with SOS administration please consider putting themselves forward. He went on to present retiring Treasurer, NR, with a garden centre voucher and thanked him again for achieving such a healthy bank balance that would secure the future of SOS for some years. Database manager, Dan Murphy, and Tony Oxley had been on the Committee since its inception in 2016 and would also be much missed. DB thanked them both for their longstanding support of SOS and presented them with suitable vouchers, in keeping with their interests, in IT and in photography. The remaining 7 Committee members (in alphabetical order): Dorien Brookes, Lucia Contrino, Francis Feeley, Sue Lee, Bernadette Parsons, Lesley Webster and Kath Williams, had agreed to stand for another term of office.

Both DB and FF appealed for nominations saying that Committee meetings were more sociable than simply administrative and duties were not very onerous, but unfortunately nobody came forward.

13) Any Other Business

25 year Silver Jubilee celebration in 2024

Previous notable anniversaries had been celebrated by several walks setting off from various parks near the city centre, like Endcliffe Park, and walking to the Town Hall where they were met by the Lord Mayor. It was agreed that a similar event in 2024 would be both enjoyable and good publicity for Step Out Sheffield.

DB thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 3.45pm.