



NEWSLETTER December 2024

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for 2025

Chairperson Report

At the time of writing the group have organised and completed, in this quarter, 12 walks with 1 more planned taking us to the end of the year.

The walk programme is a major part of the role of the footpath group but we also dedicate a lot of time reporting problems that we become aware of on definitive public rights of way. In the last year we have reported 29 paths and have had 12 satisfactory outcomes. We are currently involved with Lancashire County Council, Public Rights of Way, about a proposed diversion of Footpath FP0804018 in Aughton, Ormskirk. And with Halsall Parish Council over a longstanding issue with FP0809028. In both of these cases we are being supported by Open Spaces Society, whose knowledge and experience has been invaluable.

We held our AGM on Sunday 8 December 2024 at Old Hollow Farm, Banks. It was well attended despite the problems caused by storm Darragh and road closures in the area. The existing committee was unanimously re-elected to their roles. After the meeting a volunteer came forward to join the committee, Neil Ellis. This will be formalised at the next committee meeting in February 2025.

Subscriptions:

We are pleased to be able to report that the membership fee for the year 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025 can remain at £5 individual or £10 family membership.

This needs in the region of 90 paid members to meet our **standing costs of insurance, web hosting fees, Ramblers affiliation and domain register charges**; in addition to successful bidding to the Eric Wright Trust for a grant to meet the insurance bill. The healthy financial report issued at the AGM shows that the costs which are due in Jan, Feb and Sept 2025 can be met.

The success of bidding for and receiving the Eric Wright Grant is due to the work undertaken by our treasurer David and the Support of West Lancashire CVS.

Renewal fees are due now. Please make payment in time for the January 2025 walks. Our preferred method is via BACS payment to our account:

West Lancashire Footpath Group

Lloyds

Sort Code: 30 99 50

A/c Number: 51 56 24 60

However, if this isn't possible payment can be sent by cheque or cash to David Worrall at:
**6 Belsfield Drive,
Hesketh Bank,**

Lancashire. PR4 6YB.

Please remember to include the name of the members the payment covers.

The walk programme for January to March 2025 has been agreed and circulated to all current members. It is also published on the web site and our Facebook page with postings to other Facebook groups in West Lancashire.

The programme now includes a statement about appropriate clothing for walks; and the request to arrive at the starting point of the walk 15 minutes before the departure time.

West Lancashire Footpath Group will continue taking a register of walkers as this is part of our Health and Safety policy.

Committee issues

The “Contact us” and “Join us” tabs on the web site have now been updated providing a link to an Office form which will go direct to our web manager Chris for action. These forms have the questions / answers needed for membership purposes. The email address below can still be used for more generic enquiries to the committee.

westlancashirefootpathgroup@gmail.com

The walks programme

The Walks Coordinator’s Report was sent out with the AGM documents to all current members.

This item appeared on our last Newsletter but is worth a reminder about encountering livestock. Most of us aren’t concerned about sheep but are wary of cattle and horses. Below is some guidance from Ramblers.

- Have a look when you reach the edge of the field. Are there any cattle in the field, any cows with calves, horses, or sheep? Cows with calves are the most common cause of problems for walkers.
- Keep a good distance from the animals. If they are on the path, then you’re allowed to go off path to walk around them. If you are on open access land, then you can walk across the field to give the animals space.
- Walk quickly and quietly. Animals in a field may approach you, especially groups of cows which can be quite intimidating. If you panic, or run from them, they may also start running.
- Do not approach any animals, do not feed them, or touch them. Animals on a farm will have strict diets, especially horses, and feeding them can be bad for them.
- Leave any gates as you find them. Close any gates that you open, and if any gates are open, then leave them that way.

Footpath Officer Report.

The Footpath Officer’s report was sent out with the AGM documents to all current members.

Communications with members.

The newsletter, website and email are now well established for our communications to members. The Facebook page is proving popular although there is some confusion over joining the Facebook page and becoming a paid member of the group. Chris and David

follow up on this if non-members attend walks. As mentioned earlier in the Newsletter a link to the membership form is now available on the Facebook page and an explanation of membership is included in the welcome message which goes to people who join the Facebook page.

Our email address is:

westlancashirefootpathgroup@gmail.com

A link to Facebook is attached which will invite you to join the group. At present the group is private.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/267065369061420/>

The committee was asked by a member about offering a series of walks to complete the Leeds – Liverpool canal route. But as this is outside the remit of the group it will not be offered on our walk programme or covered by any of our policies including insurance or affiliated membership to Ramblers.

However we are willing to provide his contact details below if anyone would like to make an enquiry to him.

Alan Clarkin 07810 547394.

Committee from 8 December 2024

Chair: Gaynor Culshaw

Secretary: Mary Ellis

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: David Worrall

Walk Coordinator: Gwen Veevers

Website Manager and Facebook Administration: Chris Rimmer

Footpath Inspectors: Doreen Bird and Gwen Veevers

Registered Charity Number 511764