

Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting held in the Lamesley Room, Civic Centre on 15th January, 2026

Present [19]: Margaret Andison, Lyn Boyle, Alan Bradbury, John Costello, Alf Cowell, Lynn Ford (Committee), Denise Edwardson, Anne Marie Forster (Committee), Helen Mullarkey, Graeme Page (Secretary), Ania Retkowska (Assistant Secretary), Alan Ross (Committee), Ian Storey (Committee), Ken Milmore, Roger Smith (Committee), Lucy Topping, Jean Walker, Steve Walker & Ronnie Willison.

Appointment of Chairperson - Ania Retkowska kindly **AGREED** to chair the meeting.

Apologies for Absence [24] - Anne Beryl, Jane Brough, Evelyn Brown (Committee), Lesley Campbell, Kay Costello, Cath Fatkin, Ian Goodman, Natalie Goodman, Peter Hudspith, Ailie Langston, Carol Lonsdale, Andy McGinley, Josie McGinley, Ellen Morrison, Mike Morrison, Lucy Moss, Kevin Nelson, Hedley Oliver (President), Dek Parmley, Kishor Raichura, Gordon Stephenson, Bill Sudder, Ian Thomson & Neil Waite.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 AGM - the minutes were unanimously **AGREED** as being a correct record.

Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2024 AGM:

① The Chair confirmed donation was made to LDSAMRA.

Secretary's 2025 Report - Graeme presented a written report and Statement of Accounts to the meeting indicating that:

There had been 5 x Denton Transport minibus Saturday events plus 3 x 'local' Saturday and 12 x 'local' Sunday events in 2025; Club membership stood at 59 which represented an increase of 6 members since 2024;

Over the course of the last three years the Club had been prepared to encourage the use of the Denton Travel minibus for Club events by subsidising fares as minibuses leave a significantly lower carbon footprint per passenger than any other form of public transport. Minibus events in 2023 received a £688.50 subsidy, events in 2024 received a £510 subsidy and events in 2025 received a £526 subsidy. During the same period, if the Club had adopted a more generous fare refund policy, this would have cost an additional £368 (21 x cancellations). Denton Travel had confirmed that the cost of the minibus will increase by £100 to £525 per hire in 2026;

At the beginning of the year, the Club attempted 3 x Club Organised Car-Sharing Events. Disappointingly, of the 20 associated car journeys (participants = 42), only 5 were Club Organised [Anne Marie Forster (x2), Evelyn Brown & Lucy Topping kindly volunteering]. Committee therefore were left with little other choice but to drop the Club Organised Car-Sharing option as it was clearly not being supported by the vast majority of car owning members. This had the effect of increasing carbon emissions, the risks of cliques developing, members without access to a car being unable to participate in Club activities as well as increasing pressure on extremely limited parking at most of the walking venues;

The Club now had **£4266.54** which represented a £40.52 loss over the course of 2025;

Graeme was indebted to Ania Retkowska (Assistant Secretary) and the Club Committee members for their ongoing individual and collective contribution towards the organisation of Club events and activities;

Finally, he thanked the membership as a whole for their continued support of the Club in 2025.

A vote of thanks from the AGM to Graeme & Ania (Assistant Secretary) in recognition of all their hard work and continued support for the Club was unanimously **AGREED**.

Appointment of the 2026 Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Committee - It was unanimously **AGREED** to appoint the following Officers & Committee members:

2026 Committee		
Officers		Other Members
Secretary	Graeme Page	Evelyn Brown Lynn Ford Anne Marie Forster Roger Smith
Assistant Secretary	Ania Retkowska	Ian Storey

A vote of thanks from the AGM to the 2025 Officers & Committee was unanimously **AGREED**. Two Committee posts were currently vacant.

Questionnaire Responses - Committee Proposals:

① Minibus

We will attempt to continue to offer some minibus trips as many members value these, in particular the ability to access the Lake District and other longer distance venues.

Denton Travel have confirmed that the cost of the minibus will increase by £100 to £525 per hire in 2026 so we are looking at potential charges of £33 per person for Denton Travel minibus trips based on 16 participants.

Any reduction in price per person and/or less bookings will involve a subsidy from the Club.

Alf Cowell commented that the Club had only had a loss of £40.52 in 2025 despite the ongoing subsidies.

If able we will offer a limited number of minibus trips in 2026 due to the low numbers of bookings in 2025 and the likely increase in cost. It was suggested that these be in May, June and September.

We will need to increase the cost per person depending on quotes for 2026, but will proceed on the basis of a minimum of 12 bookings. This will require the continuation of subsidies from Club funds.

We will only give refunds if all places on the bus are filled.

We will aim at bus journey times not exceeding 2 hours to allow more time for walking, socialising etc.

Margaret Andison undertook to look into locating a less expensive minibus option.

② Car sharing

Other Saturday walks should be on a strictly car sharing basis.

This is vital because it is more inclusive, allows non car owners/drivers to attend, is better for new members, is better for the environment, and reduces pressure on limited car parking spaces, particularly in more remote or small venues.

We will aim at a maximum 1hr 45 mins driving time from Gateshead, to venues in Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire Coast, Moors and Dales, and the Scottish Borders.

We need a workable car sharing system, with more meet up to share points (Hexham? Durham? Morpeth? Other?) and considering how to cater for members who are non-car owners/drivers, and members who wish to bring their dog.

Petrol costs will be shared by the driver and passengers of each car with money to be agreed and paid on the day.

Bookings will still need to be made with the Club but no booking fee will be charged for car sharing events.

We need all members to identify if they are a car owner /driver, and are prepared to drive and offer lifts to those who need them. Specific drivers can be arranged on an event basis.

Start time for car share walks will be 10am. Post code for each venue (meeting point at the venue) will be added to each event advert.

We will encourage sharing of contact numbers for easier co-ordination on the day if individual members agree. (Data Protection requirement).

Helen Mullarkey suggested that members wishing to bring dogs will need to car-share with members who are comfortable with taking dogs or being in a car with the dog.

Margaret Andison suggested that dogs should be on leads at all times during Club events to ensure the safety of members.

③ Walking routes

We will aim to cater for all members by offering higher level/longer routes, and lower level/shorter routes.

We will ensure that the higher level/longer routes can be comfortably achieved in time to return to the minibus.

We will continue to encourage members to suggest walks to be added to the programme. Members should provide details of starting point, distance, ascent and route map.

We will explore the viability of having 'led' walks as requested by some members, bearing in mind we would need members to volunteer to lead walks. There may be scope in asking members to informally lead on routes they are familiar with. We could also ask for volunteers to reccie unfamiliar/potentially more challenging routes, and informally lead these.

④ Other

The email booking system will remain in place for now but we will look at other potential options for the future, such as WhatsApp.

Ken & Denise reported that they do not use WhatsApp so the Club will need to be mindful of this when communicating with members.

We will retain a minimal membership fee of £5 per year.

We will continue to offer an instalment system of payments for weekend and week trips.

We will retain the additional charges for weekend & week trips. If instalments are not required, these charges could be dropped.

We will discuss changing the date of the AGM to April to encourage a bigger attendance, and run an April to March programme.

In line with the above, we will extend the current membership to 31 March 2026, without charge. This will allow time for the new systems to be put in place and changes to the Club constitution can be discussed at the new General Meeting before the end of March 2026.

We will propose a £500 donation to the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association. The increased donation is suggested as making best use of reserve funds, while keeping enough to cover other expenses such as minibus subsidies, yearly insurance, advance payments for bus hire, and holiday deposits.

We will review the constitution to reflect any changes made.

As David Ellerington has regrettably decided to step down from organising Sunday walks these events are likely not to continue. However, members could arrange Sunday walks on an informal basis for example via WhatsApp.

We will explore more use of tech/social media for promotion, organisation and bookings.

We will explore offering informal and formal means of map reading training for new and inexperienced members.

We will explore having more weekend events, which could be organised on a less formal basis.

We will organise social events.

Motions Submitted & Received by the Due Date (31st December 2025):

- ① After discussion, the Committee proposed motion to donate £500 to the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) was **DEFERRED** as an attempt to alter to wording of the motion could not be accepted after the due date (31/12/2025);
- ② The motion to extend the expiry of 2025 Club Membership to 31st March 2026 free of charge was unanimously **AGREED**.

Constitution Rule 10.1.5 suggests that an annual donation is made to the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA) in memory of Claire Dixon who tragically died in an accident whilst participating in a Club event in March 1995 to which the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team responded. This annual donation is in memory of Claire.

Club Constitution Changes - After discussion, it was unanimously **AGREED** to amend Club Constitution Rule 6.3.2 to “Should installment facilities be required in respect of a Club week or weekend event, a £5 per participant administration fee will be levied.

The reason for levying an administration fee was once again questioned as a couple of members felt that this was unnecessary. A similar question was asked at the 2023 AGM and the same answer remained applicable: *“Historically there had been damage to a property which the club had to pay for. Also, there is a considerable amount of administration involved in the booking and coordination of these events including, payment by instalments, benefit of cheaper accommodation, Club paying up front for accommodation deposits, provision for maps and guide books, indemnity insurance cover etc. Also any individual cancellations prior to full payment being submitted would otherwise result in attendees having to share this shortfall and paying more for the holiday. It was suggested that if members remained unhappy with this reasoning, they should submit a motion to the 2024 AGM proposing the removal of the administration fees.”*

2026 Calendar of Events -

The following Calendar was unanimously **AGREED**:

● 2026 Saturday Events			
31 st January	Craster/Low Newton	18 th July	
28 th February	Osmotherly (NY Moors)	15 th August	
28 th March	Hadrian’s Wall	5 th September	
25 th April	Yorkshire Dales	3 rd October	
23 rd May		31 st October	
20 th June		28 th November	

Denton Travel minibus may be used for the May, June & September events (car-sharing will be used for the remaining events).

② Sunday Events - none proposed. A vote of thanks from the AGM to David Ellerington for organising Sunday walks over a number of years was unanimously **AGREED**.

③ Patterdale Week [14th March 2026 for 7 nights] - Anne Marie Forster, Neil Waite, Ian Goodman, Natalie Goodman, Lynn Boyle, Liz Beech, Lucy Topping, John Costello, Ronnie Willison & Lynn Ford will be spending 7 nights in Drey & Hollow Lodges at a cost of £137.50 per member. This 300-acre private estate is located in the breath-taking Ullswater valley, wrapped around the southern tip of Ullswater, England’s most beautiful lake. Ideally located at the foot of some of Lakeland’s most magnificent and scenic mountains (Place Fell, St Sunday Crag, Helvellyn, High Street) and, at the same time, for exploring by car the whole of the Lake District as it is within a short drive of Penrith, Keswick, Windermere, Ambleside, Bowness and Kendal. A vote of thanks from the AGM to Lyn Ford for organising the Patterdale event over a number of years was unanimously **AGREED**.

④ Scottish Week Trip - Oban [Sat 9th May 2026 for 7 nights] - Cologin Farmhouse, recently accredited with a Silver Green Tourism Award for their sustainable practices and values, is a spacious traditional farmhouse. With a Cold-Water Therapy Barrel and a Scandinavian wood fired Hot Tub from where you can enjoy some star gazing, a large south facing enclosed garden and patio there is space for everyone. The house is situated in the scenic Lerags Glen ensuring peace and privacy but is still less than 3 miles from the vibrant harbour town of Oban, with views across open farmland and walks from the door. The Barn, a rustic pub with plenty of character is nearby and is a good place to catch up over a drink and tasty local fare following the days adventures. Ellen Morrison, Mike Morrison, Lynn Ford, Ronnie Willison, Ian Storey, Jean Walker, Steve Walker, John Costello, Lucy Topping & Malcolm McVey will be staying in Cologin Farmhouse at a cost of £236.50 per member (inclusive of a refundable £20 breakage deposit). A vote of thanks from the AGM to Lyn Ford for organising the Scottish week events over a number of years was unanimously **AGREED**.

Any other Business:

- ① There were no other matters to discuss.
- ②
- ③
- ④