

Selby Health Walks

Chairman's Report for the calendar year 2019

Overview

During the year we have continued to operate independently providing our usual varied range of walks and distances up to our maximum programmed length of 6 miles. However, our records show a declining trend in the number of walks offered and the average walker attendance.

In 2019 we offered 84 walks (down on 2018 and 2017 with 92 and 91 respectively) and the average distance was 4.0 miles with an average attendance of 10 (11 in 2018). However the better news is that the balance between shorter walks and longer walks corrected the trend towards shorter walks seen in 2018 to return to the 2017 figures where more walks of 4.0 to 4.5 miles were offered. (the favoured distance among our walkers).

Of the 84 walks offered only 2 had to be cancelled

As a reminder, the results of our survey in 2014 indicated that 80% of our walkers at that time favoured walks in the 4.0 to 4.5 mile range.

Back to 2019 now and our walkers covered a combined total distance of approx. 3500 miles and we had 191 walkers, up from 156 recorded for 2018.

We have maintained a core of about 65 regular walkers for the previous 3 year recording period. 80 new walkers registered and we estimate that approximately 50% have continued (or will continue) to walk with us. However, there was a net decline in registered walkers down from 323 to 257.

The above figures show a reducing downward trend in the number of walks provided, walk distance and attendance, the latter being offset somewhat by the increased number of new walkers.

SHW divorced from the restrictions imposed by the Walking for Health Scheme in 2014 but we have maintained the general principles of what constitutes a health walk. We walk as a group, at a pace suitable for all and leaving no-one behind, and programme walks in the range 3-6 miles to meet the requirements of our core group of members. By questionnaire, our members favoured walks in the 4-4½ mile range with a marked reduction in attendance when providing walks over 5 miles. There are arrangements in place for walk leaders to occasionally provide walks of up to 10 miles if they wish, advertised to the membership by email and on the website only. This provision was not taken up by walk leaders in 2019, but you will note that the Selby Horseshoe was offered as a two-part walk programmed over New Year which, when undertaken consecutively, permitted a small number of our walkers to

complete the full 8½ mile circuit, while the majority finished the walk at the 5 mile point - the conclusion of the first part. It is hoped to repeat this exercise.

Selby Leisure Centre Starter Walks

Stephen and I continue to support the regular Selby Leisure Centre Thursday walks by back marking and occasionally leading when Leisure Centre Staff are unavailable. This arrangement has permitted SHW to avoid the need for starter walks being programmed in our normal schedule while indicating our continued commitment to this as a local resource and enables us to monitor its success. A regular core of walkers (max 15 to date) now attends and more recently, newcomers have attended as the walks become better known.

Christmas Walk and Meal

By popular choice this was once again held at Drax Sports and Social Club. It was, as usual, well attended by 60 people with 15 of those taking part in the morning walk.

Our meal was excellent and we were well looked after by the staff.

Our annual raffle raised £166 for our funds, so many thanks to all who generously donated prizes which numbered in excess of 70.

A more detailed overview of the event is available on our website.

Scarborough Away Day

I am sure most of you are aware that unfortunately this trip had to be cancelled due to a lack of firm bookings for the trip.

At the point where cancellation without incurring charges was reached we had only 17 firm bookings so we took the decision to cancel.

At the moment, we have no plans to arrange an away day this year.

Steering Group and Walk Leaders

Current members of the Steering Group (all Walk Leaders) are:

David Walker (Chairman) Stephen Price (Secretary) Barry James (Treasurer)

Carol Nardell Susan Miller Brenda Stather David Simpson David Haigh

New Walk Leaders

During the year one of our walkers, Carroll Atkinson, expressed an interest in becoming a Walk leader and has since led a trial walk supported by Stephen and myself.

Carroll has now confirmed that she wishes to be a Leader and whilst she is unable to be present today she is expected to include a choice of walks for quarter 2 this year. These walks will be weekend walks and perhaps also during school holiday periods. I wish to express our thanks to Carroll for taking on this role and wish her well for the future.

There is still a need to recruit further Leaders to support our existing team. A need that is becoming more important if we are to maintain a predominance of walks offered in the favoured 4.0 to 4.5 mile band. Otherwise a downward trend towards even shorter distances is likely (as in 2018). So, **please come forward** if you are interested in leading walks, it is not difficult, there is no formal training necessary and you will be able to shadow an experienced Leader until you have gained the confidence to lead on your own.

Funding

No application for funding was made in 2019 as our bank balance was healthy enough to carry us through well into 2020. This balance was also boosted by the Christmas raffle proceeds.

I will leave Barry to outline the relevant figures and his thoughts on future income when he presents his financial report later.

Publicity

During 2019 as a result of a suggestion at our last AGM we approached the Selby Times with a request to publish an article on our group. Eventually, after several cancellations by reporters planning to attend one of our walks to interview walkers, an article was published after Christmas. The contribution that was made by Hilary Putman to the article is appreciated and if you have not seen the article then you can see it on our website if you wish. There is a link to this on the '**Latest News**' page of our website.

Thankyou

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all Steering Group Members and Walkers for the support that you have given to myself and the group over the years to make it the success that it is.

In particular, I would like to thank Stephen and Barry for their work as Secretary and Treasurer which has been a tremendous help to me.

Many thanks to you all

David Walker, Chairman

January 2020