

**Footloose
Walking Club**
*Walking in
Lakeland since
1999*

Newsletter

December 2025

Welcome to the latest Footloose news letter.

We held our AGM on Sunday 7 December at the Crooklands Hotel and thirty eight members and guests attended. This newsletter is a chance for those who were unable to attend to catch up with the news.

1. The Walking Programme

We have had excellent weather for most of 2025 compared to the previous year and we have enjoyed some fabulous walks with great turnouts most Sundays. Even when the wet weather returned in the Autumn we still managed some good sized groups. We have had an excellent walking programme throughout the year with a good spread of easy, moderate and hard walks. A total of 24 people volunteered to lead walks which is a healthy number. Our star leaders this year were Chris and Julie Watson who led an impressive total of 8 walks. Thanks to everyone who put themselves forward to lead walks, without you the club could not function.

Many thanks to Simon Hughes for coordinating and managing the walks in 2025 so successfully. Simon has decided to leave the committee and apply his skills elsewhere, but James House has agreed to take over the reigns. This appointment was approved at the recent AGM and handover between the two is proceeding very smoothly.

2. Memorial

Sadly one member, John Harris, passed away this year. Although John lived near Glasgow, he loved the Lake District and regularly came here in his camper van. He will be missed.

3. Recent Events

- Autumn Break at Newton Stewart

In October we had our usual Autumn break and this year we went to Newton Stewart which was a great success. We stayed in a super hotel in the centre of the town which had the bonus of an excellent restaurant. The weather was dry throughout our stay and we managed some great walks, both in the hills and on the coast. On the first day half the group climbed Merrick, classed as a Corbett. At the top we were above the clouds and in the sun and experienced a dramatic brocken spectre. This occurs when one is above the clouds and your shadow is seen on the top of the clouds. The strange thing is firstly that the shadow has a halo, and secondly you can only see your own shadow, and not the shadow of those around you. Very strange.

Johnny Lovett ran a quiz on two of the nights which added to the fun. Many thanks to Johnny for his organisation of this successful holiday.

- Spanish Walking Holiday

The big holiday for the club this year was to the Alpujarra region of southern Spain . This was very successful however as the details were reported in the last newsletter they will not be repeated here.

- Summer Social

Our summer social this year consisted of a guided tour around the Leighton Moss RSPB reserve followed by a meal at Silverdale Golf Club. The event was a great success so thanks to Johnny Lovett for organising this. The success of this event will mean that we may repeat this in a few years time. This was fully reported in our last newsletter. We will be starting to gather ideas for the 2026 Summer Social soon so if you have any suggestions please let the committee know.

- First Aid Course

One additional event this year was a first aid course. Last year it was suggested that we use Selwyn's legacy to run a first aid course suitable for fell walkers. For our newer members, Selwyn was a member from the start who left the club a sum of money when he passed away.

This first aid course, which was held in September, was aimed at out-door activities. It was run by Lakes First Aid and attended by 9 members. Everyone felt that this was well worth the cost and time and should benefit the club, although we all hope there will be no opportunities to try out the new skills.

In addition to first aid knowledge, we were provided with a number of useful tips regarding communications in an emergency. These have been circulated and have also been put on our website.

There was a small amount of money left over after all the costs had been paid and it has been agreed to donate this to the mountain Rescue.

- The AGM

The AGM this year was once again held at the Crooklands Hotel. We usually try to alternate the AGM between the Ulverston and Kendal areas, but our usual venue near Ulverston was up for sale. When we needed to commit a booking there was no guarantee that it would still be open at Christmas. In view of this we decided to go back to the Crooklands hotel as a safe fall back plan. We will still be trying to find somewhere in the Ulverston or Grange areas for 2026 and if anyone has any suggestions they will be gratefully received.

Despite the wet weather on the day, we still had a walk successfully organised before the AGM. It is debatable which was worse, the rain or the thick mud from the saturated fields.

At short notice we had a quiz and a raffle which added to the fun. All proceeds from the raffle went to the Mountain Rescue. In the past the club arranged to have a guest speaker at the AGM from a local charity that helped with outdoor emergencies, and we made a donation to that charity. We have stopped hosting these speakers and it was considered that it would be nice to still give something to these charities and the raffle was seen as a good way of doing this.

Thanks to Sue Rigg for organising this event.

3. Forthcoming events

- 2026 Spring Holiday

Unfortunately it does not look as though it will be possible to put on the usual Spring holiday. We had been hoping to go to the Dolomites but when the full details came out from the holiday company the numbers diminished to the point where the holiday became impractical. The key reasons seem to be:

1. Firstly, the walks would be unguided which was a change from previous years for the company being used. Previous years had been guided and we were expecting the same this year. Many of the people interested were understandably not confident enough to cope with this in a foreign country.
2. Secondly, it is necessary to have a holiday coordinator who is going on the holiday, and no one who wanted to go was willing to take on this role. In the past we have benefitted from having Tony Mayo and Phil Walker who were happy to take on this role, but there does not seem to anyone else willing to do so at the moment.

It was suggested that if someone is going on a holiday and wants to open it up to the rest of the membership, contact the committee and it can be advertised around the club. If anyone has any other suggestions as to how we can resurrect these holidays please let the committee know.

- Autumn Hard Holiday

A trekking holiday has been organised for September 2026 along the NW coast of Spain. This is limited to 12 members due to hotel size and is now fully booked. It should be noted that this is specifically aimed at members who like the harder walks. The main issue now is finding the best way of getting to and from that location. There are no direct flights from NW UK airports so we are looking at other more complicated options. One thing we will need to factor in is the newly introduced rigorous checks at EU passport controls which are understood to result in long delays the first time a traveller meets them.

- Autumn 2026 Holiday

We are starting to pull some ideas together for the usual short autumn break. Yorkshire has been suggested, but if anyone has any other suggestion they will be gratefully received.

- Summer Social

As mentioned above, we are starting to gather ideas for the summer social. If anyone has any ideas please let a member of the committee know.

4. Website and Photographs

We have been finding that the high quality of our website is big draw for prospective members. This is usually their first contact with the club. Many thanks to James House for looking after the website and to everyone who has provided their super photographs showing our activities. Please keep supplying these photographs as they are very useful.

5. Membership and Finance

The club has increased its membership count by 10 to 93 during 2025 which is quite impressive. The committee would like to extend a warm welcome to all these new members. Quite a few of them joined in January, and it is suspected this may be due to New Year resolutions to get fit.

Overall the finances are in a sound state. The full accounts were presented at the AGM and fully supported. This has been Lynne Horne's first year as our new treasurers and she has done a great job following a smooth handover from Norman French.

During the year Lynne has been carrying out a review of alternative banks to hopefully give us BACS transfer facilities and on line banking. Our current account with the Furness Building Society does not provide those facilities. We are aware that some members' banks do not provide cheque books and this does cause them some problems when they need to pay something to the club. Unfortunately this review has not found anything suitable as 1) most of the alternatives would incur costs to Footloose whereas at the moment we benefit from significant interest, and 2) while being useful, BACS transfers could make collecting membership details and subscriptions messy. In view of this, it has been decided to keep our existing account but to keep an eye open in case we spot something better.

Please note that subscriptions are now due and these need to be sent to Lynne Horne, along with a membership form. The membership form is available on the website. As before, the membership is £10 per year but everyone renewing their membership before the end of January gets a 50% reduction, making it only £5. An absolute bargain!

6. Committee Membership

Two members of our committee have expressed a desire to leave the committee, namely Phil Walker and Simon Hughes. Phil Walker has served on the committee for many years and was our walks coordinator for quite few of those years. His quiet wisdom will be missed. Over the life of this club Simon Hughes has done a massive amount for the club and is our current walks coordinator. We wish them well for the future.

James House has volunteered to take on the role of walks coordinator and his appointment was ratified at the recent AGM. He has been successfully running the website for some time so he has a good feel for the workings of the club.

While this reduces the committee by one, it is considered that we still have enough committee members to run the club. However, if anyone would like to get more involved and join the committee, they would be made very welcome. Anyone interested should speak to the chair or any other of the committee members. Even if you are not on the committee, you are still welcome to organise something for the club. The committee will provide support to anyone setting up an event.

If you are interested in getting more involved in the clubs activities, either inside or outside the committee, please let the chair know.

7. Club Management Documents

A number of the formal documents for the club were modified or produced during 2025. These are:

- The Constitution. This is the key formal document that specifies how the club is run. It had become apparent that our constitution did not reflect reality regarding election of members, period of appointment, and general makeup of the committee. This new revision reflects how things are actually working at the moment and it also changed the title of the chairman to chair to make the role non sexist and bring the club into the 21st century. The change was approved at the recent AGM.
- Safeguarding policy. The club now has a safeguarding policy and procedure which outlines what safeguarding is and what to do if anyone has a concern. We all have a responsibility to safeguard all members and visitors who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse and

neglect. This document is on our website. Hopefully it will never be needed but if something did happen we would require it ready to use.

- Personal Data Protection Policy. During the year it was agreed that all committee members need access to the up to date membership list to enable the club to function efficiently. This required a minor change to our policy on Personal Data Protection.

8. Planning and Social Meetings

As usual we will be organising a planning and social evening, probably with a meal, in mid February. It is likely that this will be in the Kendal area but we were so impressed by the Stan Laurel in Ulverston that we may go back there if we cannot find anywhere suitable near Kendal. If anyone does have any fresh ideas where to go please let the committee know. The formula of combining the planning meeting with an informal social event seems to work really well and turns a formal meeting into a relaxing evening. We will aim to continue with this formula. If you have not been to one of these Planning and Social evenings, please be assured that you will not be pressurised into leading a walk.

We are very grateful to Helen House for organising these meetings,

8. Comments, observations, complaints?

If you have any items of news which you would like to be included in future newsletters please contact the chair. The contact is footloose.cumbria@gmail.com

Happy Christmas and Happy Walking

John Davies - Chair