

Footloose Walking Club

Minutes of the AGM held on December 7th 2025, at the Crooklands Hotel, Nr Kendal at 18:00 hrs

Present: 36 members of the club

1. Welcome

The chair began by welcoming all the members to the Crooklands Hotel.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from: David Armstrong, James and Helen House, and Chris and Julie Watson.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 AGM

The minutes of the 2024 AGM had been circulated to the membership and the chair called for their approval. This was proposed by Derwent Donaldson, seconded by John Doffegnies, and the 2024 minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the 2024 AGM.

5. Report from the Chair

The chair reported that this has been successful year with a healthy set of events and a full programme of walks. Member numbers have increased with a number of new members this year, some of whom were present at this AGM, and a warm welcome was extended to them. We had a surge of new members in January, and it is suspected this may be due to New Year resolutions to get fit.

5.1. 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.

5.2. Thanks

The chair made several thank yous.

Firstly to the committee for their professionalism, support, and wisdom, and who continue to provide great help. The club is blessed with a great team. Thanks was also given to the partners of this team who keep things running at home while the committee are busy working on club business.

Thanks was given to everyone who has helped organise the walks and other activities, without these people the club would not exist.

Last but not least thanks was given to all the members of this wonderful club who have turned out this year to walk our beautiful countryside. This is a walking club and without any walkers it could not exist.

5.3. 2026 Holiday

The big holiday for the club this year was to the Alpujarra region of southern Spain. Our group was based in the lovely mountain village of Capileira and the holiday was a great success with fantastic weather every day. It was understood that the period before the holiday had been rather wet and this meant that we enjoyed a fabulous display of wild flowers. The holiday was once again organised by John and Lesley McCartney who have a good track record of providing Spanish walking holidays for us and they did not disappoint. The very wide range of walking ability in the group did cause them some problems but they managed to adjust the programme to satisfy everybody.

On the free day, the majority of the group went to Granada and visited the magnificent Alhambra. The wonderful architecture and gardens of this Moorish palace stunned everyone.

Although the holiday was a great success, we nearly did not get there. The coach picking everyone up got as far as Stonecross Road in Kendal before it started to mimic a steam engine, due to a serious coolant leak. This was at around 4 in the morning so not a good time to break down. It was clear that it was not going to get us to Manchester Airport. Luckily the coach company managed to obtain a replacement bus at short notice which got our party to the airport in time for a reasonably relaxed check in.

A good selection of photographs from the holiday are now viewable on the Footloose website.

5.4.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. Due to our large numbers, the reserve provided two guides so managed two tours running simultaneously. The support we received from the RSPB staff in setting up this event was excellent.

We had serious misgivings about the Golf Club meal as they had told us that they did not have a caterer appointed, consequently the menu selection was very small. We did consider cancelling the meal and going for fish and chips in Arnside, however the meal turned out to be absolutely fine so we were glad we held our nerves. We did have one problem on the day when Johnny Lovett realised that we had more people coming than we had meals ordered. A bit of fancy footwork by Johnny and the caterer managed to resolve this issue and we all got well fed.

5.5.Planning and Social Meetings

We had three planning and social meetings in the year, with a good turnout. As usual we used a variety of venues between the Kendal and Ulverston areas and while nowhere is perfect we do seem to have found a number of suitable venues. Probably the best location this year was the Stan Laurel in Ulverston which we had not used before. The food was excellent and the staff were exceptionally helpful in the organisation of the event. Thanks to Helen House for organising these meetings and meals.

If anyone has 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.

5.6.Autumn Break

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 excellent 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 superb brocken

spectre. Johnny Lovett ran a quiz on two of the nights which added to the fun. Thanks twas given to Johnny for his organisation of this successful holiday.

5.7.Walks

In addition to these events we have managed a full walks programme, for which we need to thank all our walk leaders, and in particular Simon Hughes whose solid application and persistence ensure that the programme is created, and published promptly each quarter. We have been blessed this year with some excellent weather which has helped to make the walks successful and we have had really good turnouts.

5.8.First Aid Course

One additional event this year was the 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 members 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 hopefully will benefit the club, although we all hope there will be no opportunities to try out our 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.

5.9.Future Events

In the coming year we have the following events::

- A trekking holiday along the North West coast of Spain. This is limited to 12 members and is now fully booked. It is specifically aimed at members who like the harder walks.
- Autumn Break. As usual we aim to put on an autumn break somewhere, and any suggestions will be welcome.
- Summer Social. We will aim to hold a summer social in 2026. It is early days yet to start considering this however any suggestions will be welcome.

Unfortunately we have not managed to put on the usual Spring holiday. We had been hoping to go to the Dolomites but when the full details came out 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 we will advertise it around the club. If anyone has any other suggestions as to how we can resurrect these holidays please let the committee know.

6. Treasurer, Insurance and Membership Report

Lynne Horne had distributed copies of the accounts to each table prior to making her report to the members.

Overall the finances are in a sound state. She reported that we now have 93 members, up 10 from the start of the year. 6 members did not rejoin at the start of the year however we have gained 16 new members during the year.

£23 is left over from Selwyn's legacy after paying the various bills for the first aid course. It was suggested and agreed that this sum will be donated to Mountain Rescue, along with the raffle held at the AGM. There were no objections to this proposal.

Work had been in progress during the year to look at 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. 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.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Norman French and seconded by Alan Winstanley. They were voted on and approved unanimously.

7. Walks Programme and Incident Report

A report on the walks programme was presented by Simon Hughes.

24 People led walks this year which is seen a a good proportion of the membership.

Chris and Julie Watson together led 8 walks. and were declared the walks leader champions for 2025.

We have had a good spread of Easy/Moderate/ and Hard walks.

Simon Hughes is stepping down as walks coordinator and handover to James House is in progress.

8. Committee Elections

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. Both of these members were thanked for their work and we wish them well for the future.

James House has volunteered to take on the role of walks coordinator, He would be joining the committee and this needs to be ratified at this AGM. He has been successfully running the website for some time so he has a good feel for the workings of the club. His membership of the committee was proposed by Isobel Williamson and seconded by John Lee. This was unanimously approved.

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. It was stressed that you do not need to be on the committee to help organise something. The committee will provide support to anyone setting up an event.

9. Constitution

There have been some minor changes proposed to the constitution. It has become apparent that the Footloose constitution did not reflect reality regarding election of members, period of appointment, and general makeup of the committee. This proposed revision reflects how things are actually working at the moment. It also changes the title of the chairman to chair to make the role non sexist and bring the club into the 21st century.

This draft revision had been circulated before the meeting, and no objections have been raised. The revision was unanimously approved at this AGM.

10.AOB

10.1.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.

10.2.Walks Leader Contact Details

The walks programme on the website does not contain contact details for the walks leaders, in line with the clubs Personal Data Policy. It has been suggested that we should have walks leader's contact details on the website version to enable members and visitors to discuss any issues with the leader, as the inability to do this could have safety implications. It needs to be noted that the full walks programme with contact details is e-mailed out to all members so all members are provided with this information. There is a link on the website which goes to the Chair and walks coordinator and visitors do use it to ask for more information which seems to work.

The general view at the AGM was not to put walk's leaders contact details on the website.

10.3.AGM and Christmas Meal Timing

The question was put to the attendees whether in future they would prefer this Footloose AGM and dinner at mid day or as it is normally in the early evening. Of the members who voted, 20 preferred no change, 3 preferred mid day, and 8 were equally happy with both options. In view of this, we will keep the format as it is with a walk in the afternoon followed by a meal and AGM in the early evening.

11.Circulation of 2025 Membership Forms.

Membership forms were provided at the AGM.

12.Raffle and Quiz

A raffle in aid of Mountain Rescue and a Quiz were held during the AGM with the draw and quiz checking carried at the end of the formal AGM.

13.Meeting Closure

Sue Rigg was thanked for arranging the meal and AGM.

Finally, the Chair and the committee want to wish all our members a Happy Christmas.

The Meeting closed at approximately 19.30.

John Davies - Footloose Chair