



Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild

2019 Annual General Meeting

Present. J Pridmore, S Wright, B Cowling, G Brown, D Leedale, J Garwell, M Garbutt, R Ellis, C Ellis, R Laidler, D Purvis, C Thick, S Crane, M Booth, B Wood, E Hopkins, M Jefferey, Dennis Garbutt,

Apologies. R Edwards, Jeremy Morough-Ryan, Lawrence Tucker, Geoff Hale, Anne Dockery, Cliff Bailey. Paula Gittings, Geoff Selby, Steve Bostock

A word from our president Bill Cowling

John introduced Bill and he spoke of thanking the Guild for their work within the Yorkshire Show and how the loveseat that we built many years ago is being very well used for weddings. Congratulations to the guild for having a successful year.

Review of 2018 minutes

Agreed by Brian Wood and Dick Laidler.

Chairman's report

Thank you all for coming along. It's great to see everybody here fit and well

Sarah will cover off membership in her report and Graham will cover off all things about courses.

As you may have read in the newsletter this has been my 10th year as Chairman having taken over from Michael in 2009. To be honest I was quite shocked when I looked back as I didn't realise it had been 10 years. I was lucky enough to take over a healthy and well run organisation and hope I have not only managed to maintain that over the period but also build on it and improve it further. Membership has grown from 180 to over 240 which remains a nice manageable number. Financially we have gone from a closing balance of just over 5000 to one now in excess of £11000 ensuring the Guild remains financially stable. The courses have grown from strength to strength with the numbers more than doubling over the period. All of this wouldn't have been possible without the selfless efforts of the committee and especially the key individuals in the committee responsible for the main administrative roles so thanks to you all for building on the Guilds success.

Looking back over this year the shows were again one of the mainstays of our activity. We didn't attend Springtime Live this year so the first show was Duncombe Park and on a decent spring day. The stone they supply never gets any better but the team on the day made a great job. They were visited by my cousin Ruth who probably managed to talk the stones onto the wall. Thanks to the volunteers that helped out with the Countryside Days educational event. It's never easy herding all

those schoolkids. For the Yorkshire Show this year we planned a seat build in a good location at the back of hall 2. The site was dug out by the facilities team and a big thank you to Graham & Woody for bagging up 17tons of stone. There was a good squad on both Tuesday and Wednesday who progressed the seat nicely. The final day only 4 of us were on duty and had to put in a good shift to get finished, just in time for last orders!! Thanks to all attending and to the facilities team for their support. Ripley show followed which is always popular and even though its only a demonstration wall it always generates a lot of interest. We were invited to attend Stokesley Show in September which was a lovely event. We had a great location and built a nice demonstration wall. The bandstand was right next to us which seemed to set Dick of dancing every time they started playing.....very entertaining. They have already been in touch about next year and building something more permanent such as a seat.

Practice meets were the usual venues we had attended previous years. I must apologise for the mix up at Old Ellerburn having though I had confirmed it with the owners but I had only provisionally marked the day. Thanks to the team on the day for managing to sort that out. We started a new section at Long Liberty Farm which should keep us going for a few years. As usual we were well looked after by our hosts at most of these locations so thanks to them and to all the people who come along and support the events

This year saw some devastating floods sweep through Reeth and the surrounding areas. Over 2 miles of Dry Stone Walls were damaged as a result of those floods. Two separate Wallathon events were organised to bring together wallers from all round the country to restore some of the walls. You have probably already read about the one organised by Dick along with the Yorkshire Dales Park volunteers which was a successful event. That was followed recently by one organised by the DSWA. Here over 100 volunteers turned up over the weekend to rebuild the walls. There were 8 Guild members there on Saturday which was great to see. It was nice to work with other wallers from around the country. On our section there were a couple of ladies from the Dorset branch of the association. It was interesting to note the slightly different techniques they used. The end result looked good and we all had an enjoyable day which was followed up by curry, cakes and a beer to wash it all down

Once again many thanks to all of you who have helped out throughout the year as the Guild would be here if people didn't volunteer their time. Thanks to all committee members for their support and contributions over the year. Unfortunately Paula has to step down as Treasurer this year. She will run with things till the new year whilst we transition over. We are extremely grateful for all her efforts over the time she has been treasurer and wish her well for the future. She will be missed.

Finally thanks to Graham for the efficient and smooth running of the courses this year and to Sarah for all the secretarial duties and helping out with the events co-ordination

Secretary's report

Welcome again to everyone and thanks for coming along, it's great to see everyone again. Thanks to John for the review of the year.

Membership is up on last year at this point, currently standing at record 244 against 226 last year, which is an increase of 18. It's great that we have increased the numbers again due mainly to the extra

course places we have put on this year. This is made up of 14 honorary, 17 life and 213 paid members. In total 115 existing members did not renew which is only up 22 from last year. This is unfortunate but to be expected due to the increased number of courses however we did gain 124 new members through our courses & taster sessions run this year, which again is a record for The Guild. We do try to encourage all the trainees attending to continue with the new skill they have learnt but often they come along as a 'one off' as the course has been given as a gift.

The Guild website is the home of all our information and it's still a great way of promoting the organisation. We still hit nearly at the top of the first page when you google Dry Stone Walling Course. Many thanks to Euan for all his efforts in maintaining the web site. We are always open to the suggestions from members on how to improve the web site so do please bring them to our attention. We also have a facebook page which is growing and complimenting the website and has over 635 followers from all around the world, up from 500. It's a great way of pushing information to members (and those interesting in walling) especially reminders about events. Recently The Guild has also set up an Instagram page to again help promote what we do. It's been running for a year, has 270 followers and grows every week. If you have any interesting pictures, articles of projects send them and we can put them on there.

John has covered most of the activity of the year in his report so I would just like to reiterate his thanks to all those who have attended shows and events on behalf of the guild. The days do prove beneficial to the guild in promoting our craft, courses and sometime gaining work for our full time walling members. The venues and events next year will be publicised in the spring newsletter but should be on the website much sooner.

You should all have received you Autumn newsletter recently. Thanks again to Euan for sorting the production along with all those who contributed to the articles. Also thanks to all those who have advertised in the booklet which has helped make the production commercially viable. If you ever have anything of interest, please let us know and we can maybe feature it in next year's issue as it does get harder to think of content every year.

Finally it takes a lot of time and effort to keep the Guild running so I would also like to afford a special thank you to Paula & Graham for the work and time they put into running this organisation. We wouldn't be sitting here today without their efforts every week of the year so thanks to you both. Unfortunately Paula is stepping down as Treasurer in the new year. She has been a great asset and we would like to thank her for all the unselfish work done over the last few years. She will be missed. We are looking for a replacement so if anyone wants to put their hand up feel free. Also if you know anyone who might want to take this on please pass their details to us.

Treasurer's report

2018/19 has proved to be yet another good year for the Guild. Membership has increased again thanks mainly to the courses we run. We have increased the expenses paid to instructors by £10 per day without compromising on the 4:1 ratio. Once again the courses have continued to produce a good source of income for The Guild whilst helping maintain the membership numbers.

Overall for the year we have made a profit of £1131.32 down from £2060 last year. The reason for the drop in profit was down to timings of course expense payments over the year end and that we are paying a higher level of expenses to the instructors. Also gift certificates that were purchased in the previous year were used this year due to the new rules we have in place around certificates. We also refreshed all the shirts for instructors and committee members attending events. Added to this we purchased several hundred stamps this year which we avoided last year.

We are holding a stock of over 40 books along with baseball caps and woolly hats

Most payments are now made by electronic transfer so we don't now issue many cheques at all and the stripe payment platform is working well and making life easier

We have had another excellent year thanks to the efforts of everyone involved in running the Guild

Woody made a suggestion regarding not charging landowners money from sponsored builds to keep the account down. John said that we hadn't charged this year.

Training courses report

Charitable status

John and Graham talked about the process. All attending agreed that we move to charitable status

Election of officers

Unfortunately last year James had to step down from the committee due to a serious injury which has a long recovery time. Thanks for your contribution James and we hope to have you back in the future.

All other committee members are unchanged.

As part of the continuity planning discussed over the last couple of years we have been more proactive with recruiting new members to the committee

I am pleased to say we have received nominations for the following people to join the committee

Meggan Jefferies

Kate Thick

Geoff Hale

Can we have a vote on all 3 joining the committee? Unanimous show of hands

Again as part of the continuity planning I am stepping down as Chairman and intend to stay on the committee as Vice Chair and also working with Sarah on the general running of things.

I have received a nomination for Graham Brown to take up the role of Chairman

Can we have a vote on Graham taking over as Chairman....unanimous show of hands

Nominations, Megan, Kate, Geoff. New members for committee All in favour.

Graham voted in Chairman. Dave Purvis noted that it says in the constitution that the chairman needs to be a professional Master Waller. Michael Booth pointed out that he was chair for several years and was not a Master Waller therefore setting a precedent

We agreed that the constitution would be changed.

Any other business

Edgar asked where he could buy tools for the job. John suggested that we could put info in the booklets.

Page on the website for tools.

Kate setting up a charity for young offenders, she was wondering if the guild would be willing to extend their skills beyond Yorkshire, she knows a very good venue.

She talked about repairing some stone steps, seats. Raised beds.

Feature courses

John explained we do try to put this into specialist courses.

Meeting closed at 4.15