



Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild

Present: Sarah Pridmore, John Pridmore, Brian Wood, Dave Purvis, Graham Brown, Bill Cowling, Michael Booth, Paula Gittings, Dick Laidler, Ray Ellis, James Garwell, Jim Jefferies, Meggan Jefferies, Cliff Bailey

1. Apologies: Keith Ledger, Dennis Garbutt Laurence Tucker, Craig Kersey, Steve Bostock, Geoff Selby

2017 Chairman's Report

Thank you all for coming along. Another year has flown by so here is a brief review.

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

We were busy as usual demonstrating at shows and events across the region. Our first event was the new event at the Showground called Springtime live. As usual the stand proved popular with young children enjoying getting hands on with small stone. This was followed by Duncombe Park and on a decent spring day. As usual the same old batch of rough stone was brought out which always gives the team a nice challenge. The Countryside Days educational event was then followed by The Great Yorkshire Show. We had planned to build a curved wall around the back of a toilet block however when the show plans were issued we realised we would be fully hemmed in. Some speedy re-planning by Graham led us to building a nice curved seat overlooking the valley. After a rather damp Tuesday the next two days were lovely and the job finished off nicely. Back to Ripley show in August on pleasant day where the team put up the usual section of wall. Whilst the walling isn't challenging there is always a lot of interest in the stand. Unfortunately, due to a misunderstanding we didn't make it to Countryside Live. The shows are great vehicles for promoting the Guild and especially our courses

There was no Crimplehenge build this year so we got things going at Carperby on a decent spring day where a small group repaired a run-down wall end. During the day, we received a visitor proudly showing off his scars from a recent knee replacement (hope the knee is alright Dave) We then moved south and west to Cropper Fold Farm where a good squad including a couple of taster session attendees started the repair on a new section that were would end up extending considerably further through the year during courses. It was nice to see Meggan back walling so thanks to Jim for the refreshments. We then moved to a new venue for practice meets albeit one we had used for courses at Low Belford. We were well looked after by Craig and his wife and the four of us building managed to time the finish perfectly before the rain arrived We followed that by visiting Long Liberty Farm where we finally made it to the end of the long section of wall we have been working on for many years now. This also included

building a corner which is always nice for the group to try something different Thanks to Sarah for bringing up refreshments in the form of sausage butties

We were meant to hold a meet at the GYS to start the show build however due to the rearrangement on the show we had to cancel as the meet was no longer required. Another new venue saw us go right up on the North Yorkshire Moors to Ellerburn near Pickering. A small team repaired a nice section and were treated to some cream teas afterwards. Yet another new venue led us to Cliffs place at Thoraby. The turnout was good as word had circulated that Cliff was going to spit roast a whole beast after the event. This actually turned out to be a BBQ but was very much appreciated by all attending This was followed by our annual pilgrimage up to Carperby where two small teams worked on sections near the spring build, once again finishing just before the weather turned. Thanks to Jonathan & Annette for their hospitality and sponsorship

Late October saw us back at The Bivouac on a damp autumn day where a squad made some repairs to step styles. On Sunday 5th November, we wrapped up our activity back at Cropper Fold Farm again on a pleasant autumn day.

Congratulations to James Garwell and Rob Newsom for both passing their basic tests this year. We have some ideas about trying to get more people to take their Advanced and Masters that we will announce next year

We have some great venues in our calendar and the hospitality of our hosts help to make the day really enjoyable for all attending. We hope to be back again next year

Once again, many thanks to all of you who have helped out throughout the year and also to our sponsors for their kind contributions. Thanks to all committee members for their support and contributions over the year. Running the Guild is a team effort that takes time and sacrifices and without these voluntary efforts we wouldn't be here. Special thanks go also to Paula for all the great work she had done with the accounts this year. Thanks Paula its very much appreciated. Also thanks to Graham who has taken the courses and improved them further. Finally, to Sarah for just putting up with me for another year and for all she does in helping to run the guild.

2017 YDSWG 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. John will report on the financial situation Graham will provide an update on our courses

Membership is up on last year at this point, currently standing at record 210 against 199 last year, which is an increase of 11 building on last year's increase of 21 members and has increased now for the 3rd year in a row. This is made up of 14 honorary, 17 life (an increase of 6) and 179 paid members. In total 90 existing members did not renew which is only up 3 from last year. This is unfortunate but to be expected due to the increased number of courses however we did gain over 100 new members through our courses & taster sessions run this year, which again is a record for The Guild. It's always

disappointing when the renewals don't come through however the nature of the courses is people come along to give it a go and that is often enough. It is nice when they maintain the interest and attend events after the courses.

The Guild website is the home of all our information and grows from strength to strength each year. When you Google Dry Stone Walling we come out on the first page near the top which is a brilliant effort by Euan. 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 470 likes from all around the world, up from 400. It's a great way of pushing information to members (and those interesting in walling) especially reminders about events. If you haven't already signed onto it please do so.

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.

I hope you all enjoyed the booklet newsletter which is now a regular feature of the Guild and a nice way of communicating to all our members. 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 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 unselfish efforts every week of the year so thanks to you both.

Courses Report

By way of review of the 2017 courses year, the tartan number of course places was a record year, with over 100 course places. The demand for courses continues to grow. Also in the past year, new specialist courses, aimed at developing the skills of existing wallers, have been run. These have been run at Fountains Abbey. Six courses were run, covering such topics as arch building, stiles, wall ends and coursing.

In terms of 2018, the plan is to run an extra basic training course, to bring the total up to eight, and a further extra course planned to be on standby, should the demand be there. Additionally, and in line with the feedback from instructors, each course will now be run on a ratio of 4:1, trainees to instructors, to a planned minimum of twelve places, giving a total of three instructors. This, coupled with the extra course will give a

programme of 96 places, possibly 108, if the extra standby course is used. Additionally, there is the scope to grow some courses and to use extra instructors. This has already occurred, with the first course of 2018, and that now stands at sixteen places, already now giving us a total of 100 places, possibly 112.

It is also planned to run a similar number of specialist courses, with up to 24 places.

The instructor numbers have been reduced for 2018, due to one instructor not abiding by the requirement to attend at least two events/meets during 2017. As reported previously, there are efforts to recruit new instructors and to that end two people have been invited to join the instructor body. This will only result in the number recovering to what it was at the start of 2017, so efforts to recruit others will continue.

The annual instructors breakfast meeting will take place in early March 2018, at the usual venue. Instructors are requested to look out for the invite and to make every effort to attend.

2017 Treasurers Report

2016/17 has proved to be yet another good year for the Guild. Membership has increased to just over 200 driven mostly again by the courses we run. We have maintained the expenses paid to instructors and the courses have continued to produce a good source of income for The Guild whilst helping swell the membership numbers.

Overall for the year we have made a profit of £1363. This has probably exceeded the tax constraints we need to work within so may mean a small corporation tax bill. This is unfortunate but unavoidable and ultimately a sign of our success. Here is a summary of the spend for the year

Equipment. We have purchase 2 more flags to promote the Guild at shows and events. We now have 3 in total

Storage. This bill looks high because it actually covers 2 years. This is to securely store all the guild show assets such as gazebos, tables, chairs etc

Refreshments. This for the instructors' breakfast meet. Also, due to the success and strong position we are in the Committee decided to rewards all the instructors and committee members with a thank you meal. A voucher for the black Sheep has been purchased for redemption next year. This is also a valid tax-deductible expense

Expenses have been paid again to cover mileage of the committee on Guild business. These will remain in place as long as The Guild is financially able to support them

Making payments is becoming easier as most are now done by electronic bank transfer. We want to have all instructors on electronic payment next year.

With some great work done by Euan & Paula we have moved to the Stripe payment method instead of PayPal. This is much easier to work with and charges less commission than PayPal

To conclude we are financially strong whilst also improving many aspects such as the show kit, instructors' tools and first aid boxes.

Bill Cowling congratulated the Guild on its continued success and ongoing relationship with the YAS & GYS

Election of Officers

No new officers were elected so the committee remained the same

AOB

DP advise about a feature build on the site of the old brickworks. This was still in the planning stage with a view to commencing in the spring

MB mentioned about succession within the Guild and that it needs to be considered to ensure the Guild remains strong going forwards

BW. Mentioned about the charity status going forwards. JP advised this will be on the committee agenda going forwards

Meeting Closed 4.02pm