

# West Lancashire Footpath Group



News

July 2020

Dear Member

As you know only too well this has been a very difficult time for us all. We would like to give you an idea of how we hope to proceed.

Firstly, long-standing members will want to know of the recent death of two old friends of the group, Ron Cheetham and Peter Wiltshire. Both were associated with WLFPG from the early days following the creation of the group by Peter and Margaret Smith.

Ron dedicated himself to footpath work, was very knowledgeable about the local network and was able to put his legal background to work in opposing diversions. He also fought against obstructions and other problems when following rights of way. He was Chairman of the group for many years.

Peter took on the demanding role of organising the walks programme and also had a very good knowledge of the local paths. They both led walks regularly and will be remembered fondly by many members.

Having had to suspend the current walks programme due to the coronavirus, we look forward to resuming normal activity, perhaps in the Autumn. This will be dictated by government advice, and we will watch closely to see how 'The Ramblers' proceed. There are currently no walks organised by the West Lancashire Ramblers. Although walking in the open air would seem to be a fairly risk-free activity, it is actually difficult to ensure appropriate social distancing and correct protective equipment even with small groups, particularly as many walks take in the canals, which are an obvious attraction to the general public. Many paths are narrow and the frequency of stiles presents a problem with crowding and touching the stile.

In view of the shortened year, the Committee have decided that the current membership (which was due to end 30<sup>th</sup> September) will be extended until the end of December. So the next subscription will cover the period from January to December 2021.

The AGM will be arranged for early in 2021. To ensure the group's finances are clear to members, an interim Treasurer's Report will be published in September. Other changes which were notified to you in the last newsletter will apply when walks resume. Afternoon walks will start at 1pm throughout the year, if possible being completed by 3.45pm. Mid-week walks will be on Wednesdays.

We will be offering members a membership card to be carried on walks. Use will be entirely voluntary, but it is suggested that at least a name and emergency contact number is written on it. Some members might think it helpful to add important medical information. This is a common health and safety provision to cover accidents and other problems: let us hope that our walks continue to be free of such crises.

Keep safe, try to walk and, if possible, check your local rights of way.

Peter

From Ann,

I hope you are all keeping safe and managing to get out walking. Gaynor, Doreen, Darren and I are attempting to complete the walks in Michael Smout's book, 'West Lancashire walks'.

Before the rain it was good to see that many of the paths, which had been overgrown, are now passable. Even Lathom jungle has been strimmed and has new signs, and Moor Hall to Graveyard Farm has a mended bridge, cleared path and new gates.

It has been amazing to see fields being ploughed, crops planted and now nearly ready for harvest, as well as the variety of wild-life and flowers.

We are now about half way through the book, and if one or two of you would like to join us, please ring me. We usually walk on Tuesday and Thursday. Or please share your walking experiences with the group.