

As well you may imagine 2019/20 has been a most peculiar and difficult year, not just for the group, but for us all.

In the cosy confines of the Friend's Meeting House, our elected committee was just one short facing the year ahead in November 2019, but in the following February this rose to two when key committee member Andrew Norris resigned with minimal notice. Apart from his technical skills in collating each programme for publication, Andrew did valuable work in publicity for the group, and in these changing times this was missed. A fine Spring/Summer Programme was produced, alas, all for nothing as it turned out as Covid-19 hit. We were fortunate however in being able to persuade Joy Williams to partly step into Andy's shoes and she was welcomed to the committee at the meeting in June.

Since then Kathy Richardson, an all-day walker, has stepped down, soon to be followed by another programme secretary Janice Cockett, leaving us, in effect with just one programme secretary, Mike Whitmore.

Whilst the committee and I would like to thank them for their efforts over the last few years, they, and we all know that as well as facing the difficulties generated by Covid-19 restrictions, it does rather leave the group rather undermanned at present.

Making the small step of commitment to becoming a committee member would not take up much of your time, but would help our group move forward during these difficult times.

Here I might proffer a wry analogy: were the group a car, the engine might still be ticking over but bits of the bodywork keep falling off and the wheels keep needing replacing!

Getting going again after the ban on larger group walking was lifted at the end of July has proved rather slow and difficult with members of the smaller committee having to carry the burden of offering many of the walks in our month to month programmes we have been able to produce.

Whilst the added chore of walk risk assessments and keeping a register of walkers imposed by Ramblers may well have deterred some of our former walk leaders from re-joining walks offered and perhaps in turn offering walks of their own, walking habits during lockdown and beyond have definitely changed for many.

One glimmer of hope here is that our membership numbers remain fairly static, and we can only hope that when the threat of Covid-19 really diminishes and is finally snuffed out, once familiar faces will return in numbers, and with them we can look forward to producing "larger" programmes of your walks.

In the recent newsletter I mentioned I was prepared to stand as chairman for one final year. As one of the founder members of TDR. I have done my best to support and sustain the group over the last twenty-seven years but feel younger, fresher ideas are surely needed at the helm. However, having said that, I believe it would be further injurious to the group to suffer a further resignation at this time, and can only hope that my words may yet prompt one or two of you to step forward to join our committee and to keep the engine of the group going and the wheels secure and turning.

JO