



THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY



© Countryside Agency - Photographer Ann Seth

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2009

Registered Charity No. 1107926

Web-site: www.ridgewayfriends.org.uk

Contact: Ridgewayfriends@googlemail.com

Principal Address: 6 Darell Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7AY

Objects: The preservation, for the benefit of the public and in the interests of social welfare, of all the natural aspects and features of the ancient Ridgeway track-ways along the chalk downs of Southern England, including The Ridgeway National Trail and any extension thereof, and of their associated features, monuments and access paths; and the provision of recreational and educational facilities and events relating thereto.

Patron: Chris Bonington

President: Lord Bradshaw

Vice-Presidents: Michael Ancram MP, Richard Benyon MP, David Gauke MP, Paul Goodman MP, John Howell MP, David Lidington MP, Anne Snelgrove MP, Ed Vaizey MP.

Trustees:

Ian Ritchie (Chairman): Ian.Ritchie@ukonline.co.uk

Jeffrey Goddard (Secretary): jandjgoddard@googlemail.com

Sally Barnes (Treasurer): sallybarnes100@googlemail.com

Janet Hierons (Membership Secretary):

jandal3-FRmembers@yahoo.co.uk

David Axford: dnax@dsl.pipex.com

James Gunter: jagunter@btopenworld.com

Marion Young: young@ramsbury101.freeserve.co.uk



European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas.

Chairman's Report

Last year we agreed, following the re-classification of much of The Ridgeway National Trail as Restricted Byway, and its consequent protection from the worst of the damage by irresponsible off-road drivers, to change our Objects to include the whole of the ancient Ridgeway path across the South of England, and to widen the focus of our activities. Our underlying aim remains to ensure the long-term preservation of The Ridgeway as a whole, by seeking to engage the public at large, and the communities living beside The Ridgeway in particular, in recognising the value to them of this ancient track-way and its unique history, atmosphere and environment.

Our first initiative is the promotion of a new path along the southerly extension of The Ridgeway from its present end at Overton Hill near Avebury, across the Vale of Pewsey to Stonehenge and thence on to Old Sarum near Salisbury. We have named this path The Great Stones Way. The proposal was recognised during the year as likely to become a key resource for walking in Wiltshire. We believe that the successful development of The Great Stones Way will not only open up a great new opportunity for long-distance and local walkers, but will attract a new generation of users keen to visit under their own power our greatest pre-historic monuments, and to experience the Stone Age landscape around them. This high-profile new path may be expected to stimulate new usage of The Ridgeway National Trail, and to re-establish a key section of the ancient track across England.

We made good progress with this project during the year, obtaining grants totalling £11,000, from the North Wessex Downs AONB, from Plain Action (the Local Action Group for Salisbury Plain), and from Wiltshire Council, for all of which we are most grateful. These grants enabled us to commission a professional feasibility study from a consortium of well-experienced consultants, aimed at identifying the best route alignment, the likely costs and the expected economic benefits of the project for the communities concerned. The results of the study will be presented to members at our AGM in March, 2010, as well as to donors and other stakeholders.

Our focus on the new path project has not diverted us from the need to raise awareness of The Ridgeway amongst a new generation of potential users, and to this end we have initiated a Junior Ridgeway Explorers project designed to appeal to young people in primary schools and a variety of youth groups. It will mainly be delivered through our web-

site, which has continued to be developed and kept up to date, as a key element in our communications with our membership and the interested public. My warmest thanks are due to our first Web-master, Peter Gould, who handed over responsibility for the site during the year to Sarah Newman.

The successful establishment during the year of a first local group of members, for the Vale of White Horse, is already doing much to strengthen our links with the local communities in this important area. I much appreciate all the hard work and commitment contributed to this initiative by the new group's Chairman, Roger Griffin, and by his colleagues who give their time to the group's Committee.

Although, as I noted, the reclassification of the greater part of The Ridgeway National Trail as Restricted Byways under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006, has contributed enormously to the preservation of the trail, there remain sections at the southern end near Avebury in Wiltshire, which are closed to motor vehicles for the winter months under Traffic Restriction Orders, but continue to suffer grievous damage in wet periods in the summer. This has adverse effects both on the enjoyment of the path by other users, and also on the underlying archaeology. We continue to press for a permanent restriction on vehicular traffic on these sections of the Trail. We also take care to monitor planning applications and development proposals likely to affect the Ridgeway environment adversely and to oppose these, often with the very valuable support of our President and Vice-Presidents.

I mentioned last year the Review of the National Trails network undertaken by a Natural England (NE) working party, and our welcome for many of its draft recommendations. We have been disappointed, but not surprised, by NE's eventual decision to walk away from the most significant proposal, to recognise a number of existing named trails, due to resource constraints. We suspect that NE is also shaping up to transfer much of the financial responsibility for "mature" National Trails onto local authorities; a plan that we would strongly oppose!

Ian Ritchie, 24th February, 2010

THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY

NOTICE OF THE 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held at The Ridgeway Centre at Court Hill, Wantage,
on Sunday, 21st March, 2010, at 2pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Proxies
2. Minutes of the 2009 AGM held on 15th March, 2009
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report
5. Treasurer's Report & Accounts
6. Election of President & Vice-Presidents
7. Election of Executive Committee Members/Trustees
 - Chairman
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - 5 Committee Members
8. Appointment of Auditor
9. Any Other Business

-0-

Speaker: Mr Michael Furness of Land Access Ltd will report to Members the findings of the study carried out by his consortium into the feasibility and economic benefits of The Great Stones Way project.

Report and Accounts: The Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 2009, set out below, have been audited and were approved by the Trustees, with their Report for the year, by circular resolution on 1st February, 2009.

Nomination of Trustees: All the current Trustees resign in accordance with the Constitution, and all, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The Constitution requires nomination of Trustees to the Executive Committee by Members of the Association in writing to the Secretary by 14 days before the Meeting. Nominations would be warmly welcomed. If you would like to stand for election and have not already made your

interest known, or would like to propose any other member willing to stand, please contact the Secretary or the Chairman by **8th March, 2010**.

Lunch and Transport Arrangements: The Ridgeway Centre is on Court Hill, off the A338 south of Wantage, at Grid Ref SU393851. As there is no public transport, arrangements will be made to collect members from Didcot Parkway Station if needed. A light lunch will be available at The Ridgeway Centre before the Meeting at £6 per head. If you would like to book lunch, and/or a lift from Didcot to the Ridgeway Centre, please complete the booking form enclosed and return it with your payment, by **5th March, 2010**, to the Membership Secretary, at the address shown.

Trustees' Report

Change of Objects: At its Annual Meeting on 15th March, 2009, the Society resolved to change the Objects clause of its Constitution, with the approval of the Charities Commission, to include "all the natural aspects and features of the ancient Ridgeway track-ways along the chalk downs of Southern England".

Membership as at 31st December:-

	2008	Net Change	2009
Individual	161	+18	179
Family	84	-3	81
Life	169	+5	174
Associations	18	0	18
TOTAL	432	+20	452

This year we welcomed 24 new members, but we lost 4 members who had moved away from the area or died. Some movement between categories is not shown. The actual number of supporters is more than shown in the table above, as a family membership covers everyone in the family, and some associations that support us have many members.

Local Groups: A Local Group of members in the Vale of White Horse was formed at a meeting held in Stanford-in-the-Vale on 13th February, 2009, at which a committee was elected, chaired by Dr Roger Griffin. The Committee met several times during the year, and several events

were held, including guided walks on The Ridgeway and a talk on Uffington Castle by Dr Gary Lock.

Preservation: Your Society continues to monitor development proposals along the line of The Ridgeway, and to oppose any judged likely to adversely affect its environment and atmosphere. We continue to be represented at the Ridgeway Forum. The Society subscribes to the Ramblers' Association, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and the Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement (GLEAM). It exchanges newsletters with the Open Spaces Society and the Icknield Way and Offa's Dyke Associations. We continue to work closely with these and other organisations.

Recreation & Education: The Society continues to promote recreational use of The Ridgeway, and to work for greater public awareness, particularly amongst the local communities and young people, of its archaeological, historical, ecological and landscape riches. The Committee is actively seeking to recruit a Communications Secretary to continue to strengthen our communications with members and with the public; anyone with relevant experience and willing to help is invited to contact the Chairman or Secretary. We continue to publish a quarterly Newsletter, and to maintain and develop a Web-site, introducing new features and information as resources permit. A new initiative aimed at primary school-children and based on a new section of the web-site, is planned for the current year. Past Newsletters and articles, Google maps and photos continue to be available on the site, and members and the public are cordially invited to add their photos and comments.

The Chairman has continued to be an active and eloquent speaker at various events, and to represent the Association on the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners, and on the Ridgeway Forum.

Thanks are due once again to Anna Hanslip, and to Dr Gary Lock, for arranging another of our annual tours of the archaeological excavations at Marcham. Dr Lock also kindly led a visit to Segsbury Camp before the AGM on 15th March, 2009. Jim Gunter has arranged a tour of the Avebury World Heritage Site to take place on 16th May, 2010; full details and an attendance form are enclosed.

The Great Stones Way: In pursuance of its wider Objects, the Society is promoting the creation of a new, way-marked path along the presumed line of the ancient Ridgeway southwards from Overton Hill across Salisbury Plain to Stonehenge and thence to Old Sarum near Salisbury.

To this end, a feasibility study and economic costs and benefits assessment has been commissioned from a consortium of experienced professionals, led by Land Access Ltd. The society is most grateful for the grants committed by North Wessex Downs AONB, by Plain Action, from its LEADER funds, and by Wiltshire Council.

Reserves and Investments: Policy: To ensure financial stability a minimum general reserve equal to eight calendar months' expenditure is maintained at all times. Designated Reserves for such purposes as the provision of benches, re-design of the brochure, commissioning articles, or legal fees, are invested with the general reserve until the projects come to fruition or are formally abandoned.

The Trustees believe that it is necessary to have an amount of up to £500 available to meet short-term cash requirements and therefore maintain this amount in an account with Lloyds TSB Bank plc. Any additional funds are invested in the COIF Charities Investment Fund run by CCLA Investment Management Ltd.

Bankers

Lloyds TSB Bank plc,
3-5 Bridge Street,
Newbury, Berks,
RG14 5BQ

COIF Charity Funds,
CCLA Investment Management Ltd
80 Cheapside, London, EC2V 6DZ

Approved by the Trustees on 4th February, 2010, and signed on their behalf by

Jeff Goddard, Secretary.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY

I report on the accounts of The Friends of The Ridgeway for the year ending 31st December, 2009, which are set out on the attached pages.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiners

As the Charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (The Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners, under section 43(7)(b) of The Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations for you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which:

1. Gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to
 - keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of The Act, and
 - prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of The Acthave not been met; or
2. In my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

T.C.L. Webb, FCIS FAIA
1st February, 2010

7 Sandy Lane
Shrivenham

THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2009

INCOME	2009	2008
	£	£
Subscriptions	2011	2282
Donations	532	789
Sales of Greetings Cards	952	1113
Talks	240	-
Local Group Income	48	-
Sundries	35	-
Bank Interest: Lloyds TSB	-	5
COIF Charity Funds	186	452
Tax Recovered by Gift Aid	359	373
Great Stones Way Grant (see Note 3)	5000	-
	9363	5014
EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter	1348	1238
Anniversary Brochure	-	1588
Office Costs and Leaflets	1264	436
Greeting Cards	305	354
Affiliation Fees	82	77
AGM	33	159
Website	530	222
Insurance	215	108
Local Group Events	154	-
Sundry Expenses	199	368
Bench Seats	678	-
	4808	4550
Surplus (Deficit) for the Year	4555	464
Fund Balances brought forward	<u>8475</u>	<u>8011</u>
Fund Balances Carried forward	<u>13030</u>	<u>8475</u>

THE FRIENDS OF THE RIDGEWAY

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2009

	2009	2008
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank Balances:		
Lloyds Current Account	1848	1110
COIF Deposit Account	<u>10273</u>	<u>7365</u>
	12121	8475
Claim for Recovery on Gift Aid	359	-
Stock (Note 1)	550	-
	<u>13030</u>	<u>8475</u>
 REPRESENTED BY FUNDS		
Designated – Development (Note 2)	1023	1702
Restricted – Great Stones Way (Note 3)	5000	-
General	7007	6773
	<u>13030</u>	<u>8475</u>

Notes to the Accounts

- (1) The stock of Greetings Cards has been valued at Cost Price.
- (2) Two bench seats were purchased for £678 from a Development Grant made by the Tanner Trust.
- (3) A grant of £5000 has been received from the North Wessex Downs AONB towards the cost of a feasibility study for the Great Stones Way project.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by

Sally Barnes, Hon. Treasurer

Data Protection Act

Do you object to The Friends holding your membership record on computer? The data is used for membership records, including subscriptions and label printing. It is not disclosed outside The Friends. Objections or requests for more information to Ridgewayfriends@googlemail.com, or in writing to the Secretary, please.

ANNA DILLON CARDS



We are offering for sale packs of 4 greetings cards of paintings by Anna Dillon, with envelopes, at £5 each. Application forms are enclosed.

THE AVEBURY WALK

FoTR is arranging a guided walk around the Avebury World heritage Site landscape on **16th May**. **NB, This is a change of date from that first announced!** Further details on the slip enclosed. Please complete and return this to The Secretary for the organiser, Jim Gunter.

ANNUAL 40 MILE WALK ALONG THE RIDGEWAY

For the 49th time, Reading Outdoor Group invite walkers to enter their 40- mile challenge walk which takes in most of the Ridgeway National Trail between Overton Hill and Streatley. The walk takes place on Saturday, 8th May, and the challenge is to complete the whole distance on foot in one go on that day.

For those who need transport to the start at Overton Hill, there will be a coach service from Streatley Youth Hostel; the coach will also pick up at Blewbury. Along the route, checkpoints will monitor progress of walkers and will provide water and squash. Many checkpoints will also provide snacks.

Further details from Alan Smith, 3 Harlington Road, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA7 4AS (phone 020 8301 3829 or Email jungledrums@waitrose.com). Alternatively, details of the walk and other information can be obtained from the web site at **www.ridgeway40.org.uk**.