

Geograph Trustees

Newsletter 12

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Around the table

Christine

Since our last newsletter my fellow-trustees have elected me as Chair. I thank them for their confidence in me and hope that I can do a good job. At the AGM in June members confirmed the appointment of Mark Anderson as a trustee and director of Geograph Project Limited. I had the pleasure of welcoming members to Wakefield and leading a tour of some of the city's interesting streets and squares and joining in informal discussions over drinks and meals. Since the AGM, Ruth Sharville and Stephen Craven have been co-opted as trustees and directors. At our next meeting we shall be reviewing our strategic plan.

During the summer, I spent many hours on our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Resilience Grant. It was discussed by the board and submitted in October. We were asking for about £16,700 to investigate ways of both reducing our technical costs and improving our fundraising. Unfortunately we have just heard that HLF has turned us down .

Since July two other matters have generated much discussion in the board. First, issues around how we deal with complaints by landowners of trespass by our photographers. We will draw up best practice guidelines for contributors and our volunteer team of complaint handlers. Second, in response to a longstanding objective to modernise the website, we've asked an independent IT professional, assisted by Anne Burgess, for their observations. As a result we are exploring changes to the look and feel of the site while deepening our understanding of its richness and complexity, and drawing on feedback from users.

Michael

Apart from my usual task of looking after the money, I've submitted our accounts and annual report for 2017 to HMR&C and the Charity Commissioners. I attended the Annual General Meeting in Wakefield and enjoyed the walk around the city led by Christine. I have completed the Gift Aid claim and am in the process of compiling the accounts for 2018.

Barry

Spent quite a bit of time testing and implementing new file generation rules, in light of all the extra files for the 'larger' display on photo page, and monitoring the very intermittent issue generating invalid images. Have also been working on the new mapping system, mainly spurred on by Google Maps' crazy price hike (we couldn't afford the new pricing), so converting to use OpenStreetMap much more prominently (where can't use OS maps). Using new underlying system so a chance to refresh many of the mapping systems around the site, in particular the 'Coverage Map' both for desktop and mobile use. Geograph has made a donation to OSM. Have also been experimenting with a combined Photos and Map view, aka PhotoMap, leading to sale of some physical posters. Oh, and working on a secret AI, to take over all control of Geograph.

Mark

Since the last newsletter, the GDPR has come into force and I have dealt with queries on this as they have come in. On archiving, it's clear that the British Library's project has run out of steam. I've discussed backup strategies with Barry and have written a script to submit image pages to the Wayback Machine internet archive, a charitable foundation based in San Francisco: <https://archive.org> After running the script periodically throughout 2018, I was able to archive 5.7 million of our images at their display resolution by the end of the year. I have continued archiving newer images this year and have almost reached 6 million archived images. Barry has made some changes to the website so that we archive the full size images. As time goes on, more of these larger images will find their way into the archive too. This gives us an easily accessible backup repository of Geograph pages and images which is a worthwhile addition to the backups already being stored by members.

Ruth

I have barely managed to get my feet under the table long enough to keep up with the doubling of my email inbox content since becoming a trustee. It is my hope over the coming months and years to learn a lot more of what the charity is about, and how it will further its educational and recreational remits. I have already volunteered to learn about fundraising, with a view to making the organisation's approach more robust and efficient.

Stephen

Like Ruth, I'm still finding my feet but hope that I can find an active role within the governance of the organisation. As a contributor for the last 12 years and moderator for the last five, I feel I have a good understanding of where the site is at from those viewpoints, but hope to gain a better understanding of what users want. Meanwhile I am facilitating a closed discussion group for moderators to discuss matters of principle, which most of us are finding useful.

Peter

Welcome aboard to both Stephen and Ruth. I attended the AGM in Wakefield. I have handled the usual trickle of landowner complaints including one which has got to the stage of solicitor's letters, with much assistance from Mark and Robin.

Robin

It's rewarding to have played a part in identifying and appointing the new trustees. We've agreed that they need time to settle in before we approach anyone else. I've enjoyed having no role in organising the AGM in 2018: thank you Michael and Christine. Wakefield was a *revelation!* I've taken part in lengthy discussions around alleged trespass, complaints and legal issues. With Ruth, I've volunteered for training in fundraising techniques and opportunities. Without HLF support we'll be hacking our own way through the jungle. I'm taking a role in the DIY refresh of the website. The moderators' email group created by Stephen in response to a proposal I floated, is acknowledged by most to be a valuable and civil discussion space. New members are welcomed: we need to hear those voices. I've extended our presence on social media (Twitter, Facebook) with regular posts on Instagram. Trivial? No, it's a way of making the project better-known; perhaps attracting new contributors: new posters are welcome. From scripts by colleagues I've put this newsletter together. We know it's been a while since the last one: apologies.

The trustees wish all our members and visitors a happy and productive 2019. We value your feedback at trustees@geograph.org.uk or in the forum.

Newsletter created in Google Docs.

Photo: *The Bull Ring, Wakefield*, by Michael Dibb:

<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/5869791>

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The directors of the company and trustees of the charity are: Mark Anderson, Stephen Craven, Michael Dibb (Treasurer and Company Secretary), Peter Facey, Barry Hunter, Christine Johnstone (Chair), Ruth Sharville and Robin Stott.