

**The Secretary’s Report for the Fourth Annual General Meeting**

**held on 22nd September 2015**

Once again I am pleased to be able to report that the LA Group has had another very successful year.

We have now been running for three and a half years and have 119 active members, many of whom attend several activities each week. Even so, after so much success, we are still finding people don’t know of our existence and this is something we find hard to understand given the amount of advertising we do. However, we believe that our very best form of advertising is through satisfied customers, namely, our own members. Our main aim, as it has been from the very start, is to make people feel welcome and make them want to come back again. I do know that for some of our members coming to our activities has been a life changing experience and a chance to make new friends and a new start at what may have been a quite challenging time in their lives.

Our members continue to take advantage of being able to attend activities run by our sister groups –some of us took advantage of a course of Flower Arranging organised by the SOFA group at Southowram, before last Christmas. Some of our members are attending events at The Shay, run by the Young at Heart Group and we have people going to the High Five Tai Chi class at Pellon. Likewise we have a member of the High Five group attending our Line Dancing class.

We continue to have our website which keeps members up to date with all that we are doing, together with pictures of activities and outings. At the beginning of September the website had had 12,233 hits.

We have 72 members who own up to having an email address although some say they never look at their emails and 21 members follow us on Facebook which is something of an innovation for us this year. Some of the Committee were not keen on the idea for quite a time but from my point of view it is a brilliant way of getting news across to people, far better than email.

We have had a busy year – maintaining the number of activities already running and starting two new activities – Line Dancing back in October last year and more recently Pilates in August this year. Both of these new activities have met with a great deal of success, bringing in new members to the Group. The Line Dancers did us proud when they did a dance routine at the Night of the Stars Presentation Evening in May. We are very grateful that we have such wonderful talent in our Line Dancing teacher, Lucinda Atkinson, who I think could teach *almost* anyone to dance!

Unfortunately in a way Pilates came about due to the lack of support for the Tai Chi class, which at one time had been hugely popular. We are grateful to Whitehill Community Academy, who allowed us use of their School Hall for several years, whilst we struggled on with falling numbers until the very last class only had three participants. I think that was the most expensive class we have ever run as it worked out at £10 per head that day, thankfully we weren’t paying for the school hall or it would have been an even greater amount per person. The demise of the Tai Chi class came about in conjunction with the serious illness of the instructor, Marsha Clarke, and we do hope she is now making good progress in her treatment.

Twenty three of our members chose to take membership of Holmfield Bowling Club at the start of the Bowling Season at the beginning of April and although this year has not been as good for weather as 2014, nevertheless fun has been had as well as some good friendships made and many have really come along in their bowling skills. Our membership has been the lifeline that the Bowling Club needed as they faced the rise in the cost of ground maintenance. From our funds we purchased bowling equipment to the value of £300 so that anyone wanting to sample crown green bowling could do so without having the initial outlay of buying the woods and this has been a big help for several of our members who in general go on to buy their own once they have decided which weight is best for them.

At this moment in time we have all our activities taking place here at Illingworth Moor with its excellent facilities and whilst we realise that we have ‘*all our eggs in one basket’* so to speak, and we do run the risk of having classes cancelled due to the Church having a funeral, we are more than happy with the facilities provided here and we thank the Church Council for their generosity in allowing us a much reduced rent. Nevertheless I think members need to be aware that we are paying in the region of £700 per quarter in rent alone and on top of that we have our Tutors to pay.

Before last Christmas a party of 20 members went to the Victoria Theatre to see a production of White Christmas and during summer this year we have had two outings to Pontefract Races on the 29th June and on the Haworth Haddock on the 18th of July and we held a Strawberry Tea on the 10th June at Illingworth Cricket Club. If you have any ideas for trips we could go on next year please do tell a member of the Committee.

We are pushing the boat out for our Christmas Celebrations and actually hiring the Marquee at the Moorlands and details are available today about this event. We are having a Band which we are paying for out of funds so the evening is just costing members the price of their food and some raffle tickets on the night. We do want to encourage you all to bring along friends as we must have 120 at least to enable us to have the marquee. Failure to reach this number would land us back in The Loft at the Moorlands where numbers are limited to only 70.

Drawing to a conclusion now, I cannot let the opportunity go by without thanking all those who have served on the Committee for the last year and have agreed to stay on. Unfortunately we are losing Gordon Heron and Sylvia Drake but Gordon assures me that he will continue to help with the bowling and the Kurling. We have managed to press gang Jan Hancock into putting herself forward to join the Committee but Jan has already been a wonderful help in preparation of this room for Keep Fit and Pilates without ever being on the Committee, particularly when I was having my hip replacement.

Thanks are also due to those who take the money at each activity and mark a register - it is an important job as this is where new members are met and welcomed and the first impression is so important as to whether they come again.

Thank you.

**Irene Mulhall**

Secretary