

Dear Friends

On Sunday 24th November 2013, a group of walkers met under cloudy skies at Lafkos plateia. Members from our club together with walkers and friends from PAN and EOS (Orivatikos) Volos walking groups enjoyed an excellent three hour walk along recently cleaned paths towards Metochi then down to Milina and back up the kalderimi to Lafkos. It is fantastic that we are now part of the long established walking groups who more and more are working and walking together to improve, discover and enjoy the old walking routes of Mount Pelion.

Please take a look (and 'like') our facebook page to see photos and other information about this and other events. www.facebook.com/southpelion

Review of works and activities

There was time for a quick lunch before more friends and members arrived for our Annual General Meeting. Yannis Basdanis (President) conducted the meeting which included a review by Kyriakos Stathakis (Vice President) of the progress of volunteer work parties. Since last winter we have opened a circular walk from Milina via Piges and Kidonies and reopened the route from Siki to Neohori. The work parties will restart on Saturday 30/11/13 at Vizitsa and then will continue with works on the Neohori to Siki path, then moving on to make the connection to Xinovrisi and to Argalasti. Our longer plans are to continue this project to link main villages as far as Milies.

From Milies the existing network is better established and so the possibility exists to make a continuous walking route from Platanias in the south to Pouri in the north from where the national walking route O2 extends to Mount Olympus.

The network of paths that we have cleared, reopened and signed is getting bigger and bigger by the year. Our collective volunteer effort is directed towards the reopening of closed paths. We will always rely on local volunteers and individuals to keep paths open and to improve them. This is a community responsibility and we thank everyone who has continued to walk these paths and done some clearing on the way. Please continue to make small walks and when possible take some small hand tools with you to help keep the paths open.

To support this volunteer effort we are organising paid workers to clean our main paths at least every two years. This will require us to spend more and more money to do so, but it has become and will remain the focus of our spending of money raised from our members and other fund raising activity.

Budgets

A summary of our accounts and spending was given to the meeting. The full accounts will be published soon on our web site www.friendsofthekalderimi.org

In the last year we have raised €2352 through membership and fundraising. Our expenditure was €2747 with the main expenses being, paid workers for path maintenance, tools and repairs, fuel, printing and new and replacement signs. Our remaining balance is €4571. Our budget for the year ahead was approved by the meeting. It will continue as before to be allocated by the committee for purposes directly relating to our aims and objectives, primarily to open and maintain paths, to sign them and publicise and to increase community awareness and involvement in the preservation of our local environment.

Honorary Memberships

For the first time the committee proposed to the meeting the award of two honorary memberships.

Christos Krivosidis is known to many of us. He is a member of EOS Volos (Orivatikos) and on many occasions entertains us with his harmonica playing. He is 73 years old and the committee wished to honour him for his outstanding commitment, energy and enthusiasm at our winter work parties. His attendance is outstanding. When even our most energetic volunteers are close to exhaustion Christos always wants to work a bit harder and a bit longer... So that is why we sometimes have to say, 'Christos please stop, you have done enough for today, we need some food and we need a beer!!'

With the approval of the meeting we were delighted to make Christos an honorary member of our association.

Mandi Mathews was honoured equally for her outstanding commitment, energy and enthusiasm in her 'behind the scenes role'. Whilst we often reflect on our achievements as a group and can be seen in photographs working, walking and having fun together, it is Mandi working long hours at home who has created our web site www.friendsofthekalderimi.org The creation of a website is something we had tried and failed to achieve in the early years, it was beyond us to progress further than a blog and Facebook. We were very grateful to Mandi for volunteering to create us a simple site. The reality is something much greater. It now remains an on going work in progress as Mandi continues to develop it and add to it.

With the approval of the meeting we were delighted to make Mandi an honorary member of our association.

Question Time

The meeting was concluded after the floor was open for questions and answers. Thanks and appreciation was given to Mike Mathews who co-ordinates our walks as well as thanks to everyone who in so many different ways continues to support our association.

In the year ahead we can look forward to continuing our good works, new achievements, new friendships and great walking.

Thanks to everyone for their continued support.