

Report of the Annual General Meeting, 2016

On Sunday 27th November 2016 we held our Annual General Meeting at Lafkos, chaired by Kyriakos Stathakis.

In the winter of 2015-16 our volunteer work parties completed opening and signing the route from Argalasti to Potistika via Xinovrisi. This was celebrated with an organized walk in collaboration with Volos Mountain club. We also maintained and improved the path that climbs to the peak of Tissaio mountain (near Trikeri) and the path from Pinakates to Vizitsa (in collaboration with local volunteers). We purchased new signs to continue waymarking routes and replacing old, damaged and missing signs.

A new FoK tourist information sign (see photo) has been designed and produced for Argalasti and Horto. Thanks to Liz Avramides and Mandi Mathews for their hard work on this project.

In the summer we paid for the summer maintenance of various paths in the area. This will become a heavier burden as time goes on. Some other paths are cleaned by volunteer effort and this contributes greatly to making a combined community effort to protect and maintain these historic routes.

We continue to ask for help from the municipality to assist with the upkeep of the paths and propose a schedule and program of maintenance that can combine volunteer efforts from ours and other groups together with the municipality.

Treasurer's report:

Our treasurer, Liz Avramides, presented the accounts for the previous year giving details of our expenditure and income over the past year. Our income was 5288,76 euros and derives mainly from the subscriptions of our members (€10 per year) and some donations and proceeds of fund raising events. Thanks were expressed to the organization Iliochoos, whose visitors donated the overall sum of 500 euros towards the maintenance of the footpaths in the area that they use during their stay. Expenditure goes directly towards the opening, cleaning, maintaining and signing of paths and the promotion of the society (webpage, tourist signs). Our total expenditure for the year was 4979.91 euro. Our balance of funds is 5185.97 euro. A new budget was agreed by the meeting allowing our funds to be spent on purposes directly relating to the objectives of opening, cleaning, maintaining, signing and promoting paths.

In 2016 we have 390 paid up members out of a total membership of 475. Any members who have not paid their subscriptions for a period of 3 years will no longer be included in the current (active) members list. If you wish to pay your subscription for 2016 or previous years, please email treasurer@friendsofthekalderimi.org

Committee elections:

Every second year our society elects members to serve as the management committee. There were 7 nominations for the 7 committee posts and they were duly elected by the membership present at the meeting.

The new management committee is:

Ioannis Yiatrou - President
Kyriakos Stathakis - Vice President
Liz Avramides - Treasurer
Nikos Adraskelas - Secretary
Christos Fotou
Pilitsa Vaitsara
Gerlinde Falk

Thanks were given to everyone who volunteers and supports the activities of our association, participating in work parties, organising walks, fund raising and social events. Specific thanks were given to Philip and Sybil Benz who produced and funded a walking information sign and 2000 leaflets describing walks in and around Neohori.

Social Events Organisers:

Last summer we held a party in Neohori that was a great success. We would like to ask anyone who is willing to organise social events in the next year to let us know. If you can volunteer please contact any committee member or send an e mail to info@friendsofthekalderimi.org

Members' questions to Mr Thanassis Fleris:

South Pelion Vice Mayor and our member Thanasis Fleris explained to the meeting that the municipality has not been able to direct any workers to help with the maintenance of paths because of the many demands on the municipality and the lack of funds. He expects the municipality to have a balanced budget from 2017. Specific problems were discussed including the destroyed stone bridge between Argalasti and Kalamos. There may be plans to replace this historic stone bridge with a concrete one capable of supporting agricultural vehicles. Our society will oppose this (we are committed to preserving these historic structures as part of the kalderimi network). We are aware that EU funded work to improve kalderimia has taken place in north and central Pelion and asked if South Pelion paths would benefit from this funding. We were told the funding was a result of previous funding under the LEADER program and was directed at specific villages. There remains frustration that although we have supported our Municipality in the past to seek funding and we have frequently propose a coordinated approach to maintaining paths, we receive little practical help or information about opportunities. It was suggested we send a representative to meetings of the South Pelion council.

We look forward to another successful year in 2017.