

Ramblers Sheffield 40's Walking Group

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

The Fat Cat, Sheffield

November 14th 2019

7.30pm

Present – Committee - Wayne Grounsell, Chairman. Bev Kenyon, Group Secretary. Peter Robinson, Treasurer. Jez Kenyon, Website Editor. Tracey Lyne, Socials Co-ordinator. Julie Sweeting, Walks Co-ordinator.

Forty- two Group Members Present

Apologies: Gill Green, Kathy Moore, Mave Marshall, Kathryn Ellerby, Kylie McAteer,

Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

1. Minutes of last year's AGM of November 15th 2018

Proposed by Jim Conibear as a true record of the meeting and seconded by Jez Kenyon. All present agreed

2. Matters arising not on the agenda

None

3. Chairman's Report

We have had a very successful year with 3 walks most weekends and several evening walks over the summer season. We have had 4 weekends away and for the first time a week away "off shore" in Jersey. Thank you to Mark Terry for organising this.

We have had many socials and some highlights for me are the Beer Festival at Barrow Hill and the Games Day at Rother Valley. There has been another first this year when we had a coach trip to Flamborough Head. This was very successful and we hope to do another one this coming year.

We are a Ramblers group and part of the SYNED area (South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire). Myself and Jez Kenyon attend area meetings and report back to the committee and this is minuted. The Area AGM this year was held by the Barnsley and Penistone area and included a walk. It was attended by Lord Blunkett. The area passed a motion to aim to increase public transport into the Peak District area.

In April it was the 70th Anniversary of the introduction of the first National Park. There were 2 events, one of which appeared on Countryfile and members may have seen cameos of myself and Godfrey Francis! There was a local event later in April and despite the rain 300 people attended including Lord Blunkett and Jarvis Cocker.

There have been new projects happening; the Bradfield Stiles Project is almost complete and there will be an opening walk in February 2020 and as an extension of the Five Wiers Walk the area is looking to produce a booklet to include all the canal and river walking in the area. We have entered into a joint venture with the Sheffield group – the path warden scheme and so far we have 10 members from each group involved in the project.

In April next year we will be celebrating 20 years of the CROW Act and area will be putting on a walk in the Low Bradfield area.

Wayne finished by thanking all the committee members for their hard work during the year and expressed particular thanks to retiring committee members Peter and Julie.

4. Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the accounts of the group for the year ending 30th September 2019

In accordance with Ramblers policy our group accounting is split into two "funding" types – Main and Self-funded.

'Main' funds are for running a programme to promote walking and supporting the Ramblers charitable objectives.

'Self-funded' funds are for socials and weekends away.

These 2 types of funding are operated from one bank account.

Main

The chief source of income for our main account is funding from the Ramblers Association. We receive an annual basic allocation which is calculated by how many members we have and a fixed amount for running the group. The current rate is £1.01 per member and £95 per group.

Income this year was £509. We have received £399 from Ramblers, £349 for our annual allocation and £50 for a Ramblers Holiday referral. We also received £110 from participants towards the cost of Navigation Training, which was paid for by the Area (£350).

Expenditure this year was £95. £72 on web hosting and £23 on gifts for retiring committee. This is a surplus of £414.

Self-funded

The Ramblers Association, which is a registered charity, require self-funding events to be 'cost neutral' i.e. Break even. We are allowed by Ramblers to hold an amount in self-funding to pay for deposits required for upcoming events. It is difficult to predict what the take up will be when we cost our events. It is therefore prudent to expect that most will make a small surplus or be cost neutral, there will be some that create a loss.

There were 8 events in this financial year which were run through the group account. 6 socials and 2 weekend's away. 4 made a surplus and 1 was cost neutral and 3 made a loss. The Christmas Party made a surplus of £130, the curry £25, the weekend away to Llandudno £184 and the New Year weekend at Whitby expected £228. The Cheese tasting walk made a loss of £10, the coach for the Flamborough Head birds walk made a loss of £190 and the Ceilidh a loss £280. It had been initially anticipated that the Main account would subsidise the coach trip for promoting walking but this is not the case so this has to be attributed to the Self funding account. The Christmas meal was cost neutral.

Income received from events this year was £4,139 and expenditure this year was £4,052. This has created a surplus of £87. No deposits have been paid in this year for future events.

Summary

The bank balance at year end remains healthy at £1,422.

The accounts will be signed off – Gavin has been away for a month.

See attached sheet for Income and Expenditure report.

Questions

Jim Conibear queried the use of Gavin to sign off the account. Wayne responded that Gavin is independent of us and considers himself able to perform the task.

Jim Conibear mentioned that £60 of monies for the Ceillidh came in after the accounts were done for the year.

Jim Conibear asked when the Walkie Talkies were paid for and Peter checked that it was last year.

Jim Conibear asked about payment for future events in December and the New Year and Peter replied that everything is paid for.

Payments for the July curry event were queried and Tracey explained that she had paid a deposit and was reimbursed.

Anne Bradford asked about people using a personal bank account rather than the group account to pay deposits for events. Wayne responded – many venues require an immediate credit card payment and the group account does not support credit cards.

Pamela Grieg asked if we can have an account set up for payment of deposits on the behalf of group events but it is not possible – we must use the bank account provided.

Mick Nott asked about the fact that we are not going to get funding this year due to our healthy bank accounts and Wayne responded that there are limited things we can spend the money on, such as courses and literature. It is better for the money to be kept with Ramblers so that they can use it for other purposes rather than us spending the money for the sake of spending money.

Sara Collin asked about buying maps for weekends away, however we can only buy maps of the local area.

Colin Percival suggested more first aid kits for walk leaders and making sure that current first aid kits are up to date.

5. Secretary's Report

It has been a pleasure to be in post over this last year. Our current membership stands at 240 (242 if you include 2 members whose membership renewal met with problems) which is less than last year. At the point I took over, Ramblers launched their new electronic membership system and it became apparent at that point that there were some anomalies in joining our system with theirs. I have spent some time working on these and it seems that there have been duplicate memberships and some other tweaks which needed to be sorted out. This accounts for some of the difference between this year and last. We continue to see new faces on walks and we are accepting new members every month.

Our membership last year was possibly over high and I have now taking into account that there was one member who was on the spreadsheet 4 times. The new system came online

in December 2018 and we have no idea how many other duplicates there may have been. Ramblers admit that there are glitches in the system but continue to be helpful in trying to sort things out.

We have some 34 members for whom we do not have email addresses and some 3 members whose email addresses do not work. Our average age is 56 and the retention rate is 90.5%. The Gender split of group is 41% male 57% female 2% unknown. 169 members have a Sheffield City address.

Questions

Jim Conibear asked about the numbers leaving and joining over the year. Bev replied that there have been 55 members who have left (this number is possibly including some members who should have been removed previously) and 45 members have joined.

6. Walk Co-ordinator's Report

I would like to offer a thank you to all our Walk Leaders for their help and support in putting on a regular and varied programme. Particular thanks are extended to a few Leaders for their regular contribution to the programme.... these are Emma Myers and Michael (?), James Scott and they are closely followed by Keef Hopkinson and Paul Thorneycroft.

40 Active Walk Leaders have offered around 160 walks in the last 12 months, which means we have delivered on average between 3 and 4 walks each week. I think it is important that we all acknowledge this, as even though the calendar quite often seems to be struggling for walks, when it comes to reflecting on the year we are still doing really well in delivering a full programme. Also, a point to note is that the figures just quoted do not include walks which are offered on our weekend away trips as these are listed on the socials page and not the calendar.

Evening walks, there have been 15 which is down from last year and which can only be due to the weather not being as good. Big thanks to Jane Percival for leading the majority of the evening walks.

On the negative side, there have been 16 gaps in the programme which is slightly less than last year, where we had 19 gaps. Also, this year, the gaps are across all levels of walks (6 'C' walks, 4 'A/B' walks and 6 'Any' level) as opposed to last year where we saw the largest gap in the 'C' walks.

The number of Active walk leaders is down this year, as already mentioned we have 40 as opposed to 48 last year and there has only been one new Walk Leader join the team this year. This is in contrast to last year where we had 5 new leaders.

Unlike last year, there has been no Walk Leader training, either Navigation or First Aid as we struggled to fill the courses we ran last year. Perhaps this is something the new coordinator could consider for next year.

Walk Leader meetings have been 'semi' regular and usually only once every 3 or 4 months, or 'as necessary'. The one point here which I find quite amusing is how the attendance at

the meetings has increased dramatically for the last couple of meetings which I strongly believe is due to keeping the meetings very brief and introducing a social afterwards, (cheap curry and beer).

Finally, a very personal big thanks to everyone, this is both Walk Leaders and all members for making my 2 year stint as coordinator a very enjoyable time, I will miss the work and I will also miss the socials which come as part of the meetings.

Questions

Emma Myers passed on that Gill Green has offered to lead short walks when she is fully recovered next year.

Mick Nott asked about the importance of walk reports. Julie replied that they provide important statistical information to help organise more appropriate walks going forward.

James Scott also mentioned that they help provide protection against possible future claims if a walk leader reports that there were no incidents.

Lyn Prosser asked if Julie could resend the pro forma for walk reports. Julie agreed and reinforced that the reports need only be in bullet point form and that she has enjoyed reading them all.

7. Social and Weekends Away Co-ordinator's Report

When I took this role on four years ago at the AGM when the existing committee member stood down, it was on the understanding that a sub group would be set up to help with ideas and help to organise events, as I was aware of how much work was involved. The Social group is still going and I could not have done this role without their dedicated help and support, so thanks to Jean, Lyn, Gillian, Mave, Colin and the new members of the group Mandy and Bev.

Last year we took on the extra role of Weekends Away co-ordinator, which used to be incorporated into this role, when Jill decided she was no longer able to do this.

Over the last year we have tried to make sure every month there was one event some months we had two events, we also had 5 weekend away this year (starting the year was York for new year, then Mark organised a wonderful trip to Jersey, then Colin put on the infamous Dent music and Beer weekend, Followed by Llandudno and last but no means least was a great weekend to Leyburn organised by Anne.) which have all been well attended. We have two booked already for next year New year at Whitby and Ze is organising a week in Madeira which is now full.

Over the years we have tried lots of different types of events with varying degrees of success, some were well attended and other not. So we try to stick to the events that work best which are Pub crawls in various locations, meals out and music festivals.

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes talking through each proposal at meetings of the subcommittee before someone agrees to organise, plan and attend each event. We have

tried a couple of new things this year with meals after walks, pub crawls incorporated into the walks, Coach with a linear walk and meal (which was part funded by the group)

I hope in the coming year the group will still attend the various events and help us to make these events good fun, with the next event being 15th December the Christmas Meal after a walk at the White Lion at Great Longstone, there will be 2 walks both finishing close by, followed by a meal, we have only got a few places left and last orders for this is the 23rd November. The social subcommittee works hard to find interesting events for you to come to and enjoy.

Questions

Russell Matthews asked if some socials could be on Saturdays as well as Fridays and Tracey agreed that the committee will consider this.

Tony Smith asked if an email could go out to all members to remind them of upcoming events and how to attend and pay.

9. Web Editor's Report

This year has seen a couple of significant changes to the Photo Gallery mechanism.

- a) Photo Upload has been drastically speeded up, and made more mobile friendly, by switching to a system that re-samples photos BEFORE they are uploaded, so even with modern very high resolution phones, only a relatively small photo is uploaded.
- b) The Gallery became so large that it was taking time to load, so the system now only shows you the last year to 2 years, depending on the device you are using. To see the full gallery there is a link to show the full gallery, which is at the top and bottom of the gallery page.

Apart from that the website is pretty much unchanged, and continues to follow the 'function over fashion' approach which provides the information our members need while avoiding being too large a burden on the committee to update.

Path Work Report

We don't officially have a Paths Officer, but there is much to report on.

A. Bradfield Ancient Ways Improvements

This project was started about a year ago, and consists of improving about 30 stiles and gates on the paths between Worrall and High / Low Bradfield.

In the past, if you took a group on those paths the group would be widely dispersed after the first couple of stiles. For many the stiles were simply too difficult to attempt, resulting in the paths being rarely used, in spite of having great views (especially for paths so close to Sheffield).

All the work is complete now, the trickiest stiles replaced with kissing gates, and we are holding an 'opening' walk in February to bring together all the partners and groups involved (details to be published in due course).

The work was coordinated by Jez and Terry Howard (Sheffield Ramblers), involved maintenance teams from Sheffield and Rotherham Ramblers, Peak Park volunteers and Sheffield ROW Rangers. It was funded by Sheffield Lakeland Partnership (Lottery funded), Bradfield Walkers are Welcome, Bradfield Parish Council, SYNED Area (using the Ivy Cowen legacy) and Sheffield ROW department.

B. Sheffield Path Wardens

What involves candlelit cloisters, stone mansions, mysterious scrolls, alien symbols and pellets of strange substances? 20 ramblers at a hotel with a Sheffield map, piles of Play-Doh and the counters from Star Trek Monopoly, planning a Path Warden scheme...

This joint Sheffield groups project is to help ensure every path in the Sheffield area is walked and checked periodically, to help Sheffield ROW department to prioritise what to fix, to help Ramblers identify future improvement options, and to introduce people to path surveying. It is a key part of fulfilling Ramblers charitable objectives.

Path surveying is easy to do, means you explore paths you will not have walked before, and when things are fixed you get the satisfaction of knowing you have made life a bit easier for the army of walkers out there.

If anyone wants to get involved, please email jez@jez.cc

C. Pathwatch

This has been temporarily abandoned locally. Instead we are using a simple web page to report issues: www.jez.cc/path which lets you quickly report problems out in the field.

Colin Percival asked how to make reports and Jez explained.

10. Elections

Chairman - Wayne Grounsell – Martin Wistow

Social & Weekends Away Co-ordinator – Tracey Lyne – Anne Bradford

Treasurer – Vacancy

Walks Co-ordinator – Vacancy

The following were the only nominations received by the close of nominations and are therefore deemed elected, to be ratified at the AGM.

Secretary – Bev Kenyon

Web Editor – Jez Kenyon

Both were ratified

Voting took place for Chair and the group heard from Martin Wistow and Wayne Grounsell.

Wayne was elected as Chair by 30 votes to 18.

Anne Bradford withdrew her nomination for Socials and Weekends Away Coordinator

Tracey Lyne was nominated as Social and Weekends Away Coordinator and this was ratified. She spoke to the group and all the sub-committee agreed to continue to work together.

11. Motions for discussion and consideration, previously notified.

None

12. AOB – Tony Smith asked about how we can encourage the use of car sharing. Whats App was mentioned and some members agreed that they already use it informally, although this is not a system that we can use as a whole group. Face book would be another medium for members to get in touch with each other on an informal basis. The group welcomes any way of improving car share initiatives.

There were still vacancies for the position of Treasurer and Walks Coordinator and Wayne asked if anyone present wished to volunteer. Tony Smith volunteered as Treasurer and this was ratified and Mick Nott and Sara Collin volunteered to share the role of Walks Coordinator. These

Jez proposed a motion that this be accepted which was seconded by Julie and unanimously agreed.

14. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.