

SEDGEMOOR RAMBLERS

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Woolavington Village Hall on

Saturday 26th October 2024 at 2.00pm

PRESENT: John Perry (Chair), Mike Aldridge (Treasurer), Linda Hay (Secretary), Sandra Matthews & Esme Gilling (Programme Secretaries), Rhona Hall (Membership Secretary), Sharon Perry (Social Secretary), Tony Fawle (Working Party Lead), Jenny Fawle, Pam Wills, Edward Levy, Brian Gilling, Hazel Boxer, Tina Ross, Carole Baker, Jean Fincken, Alan Chick, Sara Chick, Philippa Taylor, Brigitte Rees.

1. **WELCOME:** John Perry welcomed everyone to the AGM
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Helen Young (Social Secretary), Chris Preston, Sue Smith, Peter Wallis, Dee Wallis, Richard Barnes, Angela Coleman.
3. **MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 28TH OCTOBER 2023:**
These were accepted as a true record.
Proposer: Rhona Hall
Seconded: Sandra Matthews
4. **MATTERS ARISING:**
There were no matters arising.
5. **OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

Chairman – John Perry

Firstly, I would like to thank the Committee for their continued hard work in running our group. Thank you to Mike our Treasurer, Rhona our Membership Secretary, Linda our Secretary and Publicity officer, and Sharon and Helen our Social Secretaries. Also to Tony for leading our footpath Working Parties.

In particular, this year, I would like to thank Esme and Sandra, our Programme Secretaries. Esme is standing down and Sandra is also likely to stand down, unless the new Programme Secretary takes over Esme's part of the role and works alongside Sandra. To my mind, co-ordinating, checking and communicating our Walks Programme is at the heart of what we do.

This year has been a challenging year for our walks, due principally to sustained periods of dreadful weather. I would like to thank all our Walk Leaders for their tremendous efforts to plan, recce and lead our walks.

A few highlights for me this year were our New Year lunch at The Duck, Summer lunch at Nether Stowey, plus our Summer Outing to Weymouth in September. It was lovely to see so many of our members at these well attended events. I know everyone really enjoyed them. Thanks to Helen, Sharon and Ed for making these three events happen.

I look forward to the year of walking ahead, and hopefully some better weather so we can continue to enjoy our rambling.

Treasurer – Mike Aldridge

The accounts for 1st Oct 2023 until 30th Sept 2024 have been audited by Peter Levy as being accurate and copies circulated.

Some points from the last year's accounts are as follows:

We received, from Central Office, £223.27 towards our running costs. This is lower than the previous year due to a fall in membership. We get so much per member plus an amount for the group.

We received £30 from the walking partnership, 3 lucky people had a break in the Cotswolds. This comes from the Ramblers Walking Partnership provided they mention Sedgemoor Ramblers when booking. We receive £10 for each UK holiday booked and £30 for each worldwide holiday.

Edward has been busy again selling his walking books and he kindly donated £110.50. His book is gradually creeping up the best sellers list!

The £2.00 as it says is from the sale of Sedgemoor Ramblers badges.

The Summer lunch made a gross profit of £70.00 which included the raffle money many thanks to all those involved. The other payments are straightforward.

The Summer outing had a shortfall of £53.00 which we covered from our self-funding monies. A big thankyou to all those involved with planning, recceing and leading walks on the day. In previous years Ed has managed the funds for the summer outing, this year monies went through our books.

Details are attached as a PDF file..

Membership – Rhona Hall

There has been quite a steep decline in membership over the last year. At last year's AGM I reported 130 members and this has now reduced to 110 (plus four affiliates).

Over the last year we have had 9 new members, seven of these since July. There is therefore a mini upward trend recently and I hope this continues.

Over the same period however we have lost 29 members, for varying reasons. Two have died, two moved to another group, fifteen resigned and ten allowed their membership to lapse.

As in previous years, I have set out below a comparison table for our neighbours as I believe people find it useful. All the groups in the Somerset area have reduced in numbers – some more than others, with the smallest reduction in Taunton Deane. This is not in line with the overall upward trend in national membership. There is also a reduction in the number of people reporting their gender when joining which reduces the relevance of the gender profile. I therefore intend to leave this out from next year onwards.

We also continue to be an aging organisation. All the Somerset branches have an average age over 70, while nationally the average is 69. This does not bode well for the longer term future of Ramblers.

Group	Membership (start to end of year)	Gender profile M/F	Average age	Volunteer %
National	101,842- 103,808	32/40	69	16%
Sedgemoor	130 – 110	33/48	71	26%
Mendip	365 – 332	37/43	71	23%
South Somerset	227 – 216	38/41	74	15%
West Somerset	154 – 124	31/52	72	31%
Taunton Deane	267 - 261	35/44	73	24%
Woodspring	230 – 219	35/45	72	16%

Secretary – Linda Hay

This has been my first year as secretary and have enjoyed fulfilling the role at our quarterly meetings and in preparation for our AGM. I would like to thank Sharon Perry, who covered for me when I was unable to attend rearranged committee meetings.

I have monitored our email regularly and passed on to the committee and wider membership anything that has come in of interest. There have been a few enquiries about membership but these weren't followed up by joining.

I received a bundle of new membership leaflets from Central Office. They have removed the membership fee from the leaflet design in order to reduce wastage. I was also advised that individual annual membership will increase by £2 to £43, effective from 1st October 2024.

Working Party – Tony Fawle

Thank you to John Perry for leading today's walk which was attended by 12 members.

Many thanks to our team: John Perry, Mike Aldridge, Ian Morrison and Stephen Fry. Richard Barnes was unavailable due to renovating his bungalow. Neil Anderson has moved to other voluntary work and has left the team.

Glyn Edwards, from the Rights of Way team at Somerset County Council, has provided assistance with getting gates on site and has been most helpful. He had hoped to attend our AGM, giving a talk, but unfortunately was unavailable on the day.

This year despite some challenging weather we have had an active time and rewarding objectives to ensure the continued upkeep of the paths we were asked to make improvements on. Bawdrip Parish Council wrote a letter of thanks for the work done.

In the last 3 years a lot of work has been completed. With County Council cutbacks we wait to see what that might mean for us.

Jan - Kissing gate made stock proof at Chilton Trinity. Wick nr Hinkley Point: replaced 2 foot plates on wooden stile and cleared blocked entrance to path.

Feb - Chedzoy: 1 gate placed and path clearance and 2 footplates installed

March – Bawdrip: 1 metal gate placed, replacing wooden stile

April - Stolford: repaired 3 stiles requiring footplates and cleared blocked paths

May - Bawdrip: 2 metal gates placed replacing wooden stiles

June - Woolavington: 1 gate replacing old stile

July - Bawdrip: 2 footplates placed Edington: 1 footplate placed Woolavington: way markers placed

Aug - Bawdrip: 1 gate and waymarkers

Sept - No Working Party as Somerset County Council unable to get landowner's permission for planned task at Greinton

Oct - Coast Path at Chilton Trinity: placed temporary way markers on posts which we installed as a temporary measure whilst work on the Barrage continues.

Programme – Esme Gilling and Sandra Matthews

At the time of writing the new programme is about half full, but, is now more than half full at the time of the AGM with 5 Saturdays and 5 Sundays still available. Despite a slow start we usually manage to end up with a fairly full programme with a good mix of Saturday and Sunday walks.

Unfortunately, this year has been unusually problematic, owing to the extremely wet winter and spring, with many walks having had to be cancelled as a result. The good news is that this then makes it easy for walk leaders to simply choose a new date and re-schedule.

Thank you to all the walk leaders who continue to submit walks to help keep the programme viable.

Social – Sharon Perry and Helen Young

New Year's Lunch – January 2024

The New Year's Lunch on 14th January 2024 was well attended. Everyone enjoyed the occasion at The Duck at Burtle.

Summer Lunch

The Summer Lunch was held at St Mary's Church Centre at Nether Stowey on 28th July. We had 26 ramblers attending, with a walk held before our lunch. It was a lovely occasion, with everyone enjoying the opportunity to sit down for a leisurely lunch and have a chat.

A small profit of £30 was made from the lunch and a raffle raised a further £40. This has been passed to the Treasurer.

New Year Meal Out

The date in our diary for this is 12th January 2025 at 12.30. We have provisionally booked lunch for 26 at the Bath Arms in Cheddar. If you are interested in attending, please contact Helen. Members are asked to reserve their place by sending Helen a £10 deposit. Menu choices will be circulated prior to the 12th January.

Publicity – Linda Hay

Unfortunately, due to my daughter's illness, I haven't had as much time as I would have liked to devote to this role. I have, however, entered a piece each month in our Burnham-on-Sea Local Reach.

I intend putting some posters and leaflets, showing our contact details, in a few local venues. If anyone would like any leaflets to give to potential members, or ideas of good spots for placing leaflets, please let me know.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

John Perry stated that the following serving members of the committee were willing to stand for re-election:

- John Perry – **Chairman**
- Mike Aldridge - **Treasurer**
- Rhona Hall - **Membership Secretary**
- Linda Hay – **Secretary and Publicity Secretary**
- Helen Young – **Social Secretary** (but only in a reduced capacity, she will not be organising the summer lunch.)

He asked if anyone wished to stand for any of these posts. There were no offers.

These posts were dealt with together.

Proposer: Sharon Perry

Seconded: Tony Fawle

All in favour.

All duly re-elected.

Programme Secretary

John Perry asked if anyone was willing to take on the role of Programme Secretary. Edward Levy volunteered for the role.

Proposer: Pam Wills

Seconded: Rhona Hall

All in favour.

Edward Levy was duly elected as Programme Secretary

Ordinary Members

There were no offers.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Perry thanked Sharon Perry for providing the catering for the meeting.

The Meeting was then closed.