

SEDGEMOOR RAMBLERS

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Berrow Village Hall, TA8 2NL, on

Saturday, 20th October 2018 at 13.30

PRESENT: Edward Levy (in the Chair & Programme Secretary), Mike Aldridge (Treasurer), Jenny Fawle (Social Secretary), Tina Ross (Membership Secretary), Hazel Boxer (Footpaths Secretary), Jean Fincken (Secretary), Sandra Matthew, Jan Horn & Rhona Hall (Ordinary Members), Tony Fawle (Working Party leader) Esmé Gilling, Brian Gilling, Pam Wills, Jackie Morris, Dave Morris, Carole Baker, Richard Barnes, Chris Preston, Irene May, Sue Smith, Liz Henderson, Tricia Robson, Lyn Boden

- 1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Rose Callard, Judith Newberry, Maribel Hamilton, Mike Tompsett, Margaret Welch, Jill Goodwin, Peter & Dee Wallis, Alan & Sara Chick, Sue Hazelwood, Anne Morris, Franklin Apfel & Sabrina Cecconi.

- 2 **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 21st OCTOBER 2017:**

These were agreed and accepted as a true record. Proposer - Tony Fawle
Seconded - Jenny Fawle

- 3 **MATTERS ARISING:**

There were no matters arising.

- 4 **OFFICERS' REPORTS:**

CHAIRMAN (Edward Levy)

I took on the role of chairman last October following Tony Fawle standing down after 9 years; a difficult act for me to follow.

Throughout the year the group has been able to maintain its programme of walks with weekly walks on Sundays, twice monthly Saturday walks and weekly evening walks during the lighter summer evenings. It has been a year of adverse weather conditions. The walk programme was interrupted by in early March when following a blizzard the walk on Sunday 4th March was cancelled. Then two weeks later a further snow storm resulted in the cancellation of the walk on Sunday 18th March. The weather then made a complete turnaround with hot and sunny weather for most of the summer. It was sometimes too hot but we all appreciated no mud.

We have enjoyed some delightful and interesting walks over the year and I would like to thank the walk leaders for the trouble they take in researching and recceing their walks. Particularly memorable was the Dorset bluebell walk. The carpet of bluebells on the cliff tops under a clear blue and sunny sky was quite breathtaking. A day trip to London with a walk around some of the major sights followed by a pub meal was well attended and enjoyed by all as was the summer outing to North Devon. The holiday to the Dingle Peninsular in southern Ireland was very successful. The wonderful scenery in the area provided some beautiful places to

walk. This was topped off with brilliant summer weather making a truly memorable holiday.

Our summer lunch again took place at Manor Lodge Wembdon where Tony and Jenny were our hosts. This was the one day when we would have liked it to be warm and sunny so that we could sit outside and enjoy our meal. Regrettably the day turned out to be wet. Never the less everyone enjoyed the lunch thanks to Tony and Jenny letting us spread ourselves around their home to shelter from the rain.

Throughout the year our footpath working party has continued to repair stiles, fit new gates and clear the growth on over grown footpaths. The party is made up of just a small number of members and would welcome anyone who is prepared to come along and assist.

Our committee has been active throughout the year and we have had some lively committee meetings. The aim is to ensure the group runs smoothly and to bring the pleasure of walking to all of our members. I should like to thank the committee members for their time and effort.

In this modern age technology has taken over. We have tried to keep on top of this although it does not come so easy to the older generation. We have become aware that the group's website is in need of a makeover. We have been very lucky to have Mike Tomsett on board. He has taken over building a new website for the group. He has spent many long evenings shut away in his office working on the website. He still has a little bit more work to do on it but we should have it up and running in the next few months. I should like to thank Mike for all of the work he has done. Once the new website is up and running we will try and make sure that it is kept up to date with all of the latest news and photos from the group.

We have some interesting events planned for 2019 with holidays planned in the Peak District, the Isle of Man and Eastbourne as well as our usual Christmas meal, summer outing and, summer lunch. So it looks as if 2019 will become another memorable year.

TREASURER (Mike Aldridge)

Good afternoon to everybody and thank you for attending our AGM.

I have prepared the accounts for Sedgemoor Ramblers for the year 1 Oct 2017 to 30 Sept 2018, Peter Levy has for many years audited these prior to the AGM but unfortunately this year due to family matters and a trip away he has been unable to approve them. They will be audited next week on his return. I have also forwarded the accounts to Robin Downton our Area Treasurer who then passes them to Central Office.

So what's been going on during the last year- for my work it has been fairly quiet in comparison to previous years when we have had a Birthday Party and getting funds together for our Anniversary bench and Walking Festival.

This year we received our basic allocation from Area Funding of £239. Our other income was 2x £10 from the Walking Partnership. This is linked to Ramblers Holidays 2 lucky people went away but due to Data Protection Central Office are not able to tell you who they were!

Our other expenses are much on a par as last year. Tina and Edward do their best to keep the cost of printing and posting our programmes to a minimum but it still adds up to our biggest expenditure for the year. Our web-site fees this year is due to 1 Annual payment of our domain name and a bi-annual payment of the web registration fee.

We can move on to our self-funded activities for the last year which again has shown that we have made a profit .A big thankyou to Jenny on her organisational skills and to Edward who returned a profit on the Summer Outing an awkward item to cost because a minimum number is required to cover the coach travel any numbers over that and Edward is in profit.

We now have a balance of £650.96 which includes £441.72 designated funds and £317.30 in our self-funded account. We are looking at using some of this money to subsidize the summer outing next year and also making a contribution towards travel costs to another groups walking festival, Small coach or mini-bus for the day, date and area to be confirmed.

Brian Gilling asked why the funding from Ramblers differed from previous year.

Mike Aldridge explained that we received more in previous years when requests were made for specific items i.e. the memorial bench, but currently we have too large a balance for them to agree to give us more. The basic payment is based on so much per member and as we have no major expenditure planned he expects that this will be the payment next year too. If we have any major expenditure in mind by Sept 2019 then he can make a case to ask for additional funds at that time.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (Tina Ross)

As at 1 October 2018 there were 138 members (142 last year - fall of 2.81%)

Maximum membership during the period	144 May
Minimum membership during the period	137 August
Average for period Oct 16 - Sept 17	141
Average for same period Oct 16 to Sept 17	144.67

During the 12 months:

There were 16 new members, compared to 12 and 13 from the previous 2 years. We still have a high turnover of new members who only join for a year - perhaps good intentions which do not come to fruition. Comments received from new walking members or those from other groups are that we are a friendly and approachable group

Ramblers and SW Group activity:

Ramblers overall are down 2% on the previous year.

Apart from Mendip (+10%) Woodspring (+2%) and West Somerset (+24 %!) the other groups in the area have also declined. Somerset Young Walkers (-16%), South Somerset (-8%) and Taunton Deane (-6%) - (all figures as at 1 June 2018). Many of our members are non-walking members who support the work of Ramblers in their work in maintaining, improving and fighting for the access to the countryside which all walkers enjoy, whether or not they are members or affiliates of the Ramblers. Our continued thanks to them, as well as the walkers for their continued support. Lots of work has also been done in relation to the changes to the data protection legislation on how are records are kept together with Ed & Jean. Edward added that he reported on this at the area meeting and found that other groups had done little in this area.

SECRETARY (Jean Fincken)

This is my 2nd year as secretary and I think I am finally getting to grips with the role. Other than the note taking at committee meetings and the AGM I'm the one responsible for those emails you receive - which are hopefully not too many and are reasonably informative. Via these I can for instance, notify everyone of forthcoming events or if walk leaders have any changes to walks once in the programme I can pass the changes on to all other members (well those who have opted to be contacted by email). On which note can I take this opportunity to ask everyone to ensure that they have made their contact options clear on the Ramblers website and update these if details, like your email, change so I can keep in contact with you all. Also Ramblers have issued new leaflet telling prospective new walkers how to join, walk leaders should carry these and some could be placed in local libraries etc.

FOOTPATH SECRETARY (Hazel Boxer)

In our first year as footpath secretaries Tina and I had a total of 79 paths to check. 56 passed, 13 part passed and 10 failed. We have also had 13 diversions, 11 of which are ongoing and 2 which have been confirmed. In order to do the checking we have the help of Ed, Mike, Jean and Karen, also two new recruits Sandra and Rhona and would like to take this opportunity to thank them all. Back in May Tina and I attended an area Footpath secretaries meeting, chaired by Carl Earl. On October 9th we had a training session with Jake Taylor from SCC. We met at Warren Farm, Charterhouse to walk a footpath that Tina and I had previously checked to discuss any queries plus those that arose. Jake was very helpful and we all gained knowledge from the morning. Tina has written up notes for those who weren't able to attend and we are meeting at her house in November to bring everyone up to date. So thank you again to everyone in the team.

Working Party Report - (Tony Fawle)

Since last year's AGM we have completed 12 Working parties covering work which involved Path clearing, stile repairs, replacing a sleeper bridge and installing new metal Stratford gates.

Somerset County Council and their Rights of Way Team decide where we should work and send details to me in advance. This year the party has worked in many

areas of Sedgemoor and off area to help the Rights of Way team. We have built up a good relationship over the years with SCC who appreciate the volunteers work. Tony also asked that when walkers discover faults with furniture on paths that rather than reporting it to him that they should report it directly using the Explore Somerset site. Edward commented that the new website, once operational, will have a link direct to Explore Somerset.

PROGRAMME SECRETARY (Edward Levy)

We have had a full year of walking with our weekly Sunday, twice monthly Saturday and weekly summer evening walks. Many of our walk have been on our "own patch" between the Mendips and the Quantocks but we have also gone further afield including several walks on Exmoor, a bluebell walk in Dorset, a walk by the river and hills close to Bath and a walk around central London viewing many of the major sights.

A rather wet winter was followed by heavy snow in early March which made it necessary to cancel two Sunday walks. We then had a most glorious summer walking under sunny clear skies but perhaps a little too hot on some days.

Our summer outing took us to North Devon where we walked on the South West Coast Path around the Taw Estuary and along the coast to Westward Ho! This turned out to be a great day out enjoyed by all.

Our summer holiday took us to Southern Ireland in June. A week on the Dingle Peninsular in the far south west was a wonderful experience. Our walking took us along coastal sandy beaches, high cliff tops and over mountains. The glorious summer weather had not missed Ireland and we walked in warm sunshine every day.

Getting enough walks to complete our Sunday walking programme is becoming increasingly difficult. Sunday is our traditional walking day when we undertake longer walks on full day's expeditions. The popularity of Sunday walks is waning and we have only managed to keep going due to the good will of some leaders who have put in two or three walks in each programme. The adverse can be said about our Saturday walks. When we introduced them a few years ago it was on the basis of one per month. This has increased to two per month but could now be increased even further as I frequently do not have enough Saturdays to cover walks being offered by leaders.

I am in the process of preparing the December - March programme and I have Sundays unfilled in both December and January. If they cannot be filled the programme will be issued with some blank Sundays. However for those who want to walk on the blank Sundays I will try and put in walks for them. These walks will be announced on the website. Details of the walks will also be sent out by email to those members who have selected email as a preference for contact.

For the coming year I still plan to run a weekly Sunday, twice monthly Saturday and weekly summer evening walks. The summer outing will take place in early July and full details will appear in the Spring/Summer programme. We have made

a profit on our summer outings in the last few years and we intend to use some of those profits to subsidize the 2019 outing. So your day out will be an even bigger bargain than usual.

Holidays have been planned for 2019.

In May we have a mid-week break to the Peak District which is being organised by Jenny. We have almost filled the accommodation but Jenny may be able to fit in another one or two in so please speak to her if you are interested.

A week long holiday to the Isle of Man departing on 10th June is now in the course of booking. We will be staying in a guesthouse in Douglas and undertaking walks across the island. The guesthouse still has some accommodation available so if you are interested please speak to me.

A week long holiday to Eastbourne in Sussex is planned departing on 2nd September. We will be staying in Shearings Burlington Hotel and undertaking walks on the South Downs. This holiday is on a self-booking basis i.e. you book your own accommodation in the hotel and make your own travel plans to and from Eastbourne. No bookings have yet been made at the hotel as I am currently compiling a list of persons interested. Again if you are interested please speak to me and your name can be added to my list. It is anticipated that hotel bookings will be made in the Spring and that single rooms should be booked quickly.

I will conclude by wishing everyone happy and enjoyable walking in the coming year.

Tony Fawle stated that initially Saturday walks were to have been under 5 miles and suggested that the mileage should be kept down and that walks of 8 miles should go onto the Sunday programme. Edward said that this was difficult to control as people opt for a date initially and the mileage is only noted when full details are given, often near the production of the programme. He said that he would be happy to fill gaps at short notice from his library of walks and noted that other groups do this by instructing people to look at the website when there is no published walk for a date. He asked that all Saturday walks be kept to a maximum of 6 miles.

SOCIAL SECRETARY (Jenny Fawle)

Christmas Dinner Party 2017 The first social event of the year was again held at Combe House Hotel, Holford, a lovely hotel at the foot of the Quantocks, where we enjoyed good food, plenty of Christmas atmosphere and great company.

The forthcoming Christmas Dinner Party on 14 December will be held at the newly-refurbished Enmore Park Golf Club and promises to be another enjoyable evening. 35 people have booked so far and there are still a few places available.

Day in London - Edward arranged a day out walking in London in March and I was happy to help by booking the Berry's coach tickets and a meal in Hammersmith, giving us the chance to relax and enjoy a meal together at the end of an interesting day before catching the coach home.

Summer Lunch in July - We decided to cancel the pre-lunch walk because of the wet weather but there was no way the rain was going to stop us having a good time and, even though the Summer Lunch was indoors, it was enjoyable. As always, I am really grateful for the offers of help and sharing of the work, both on the day and by making lovely salads and puds with 8 people making and donating dishes. We are willing to hold another Summer Lunch next year at our house. Other groups have similar events but this is the only group that has had a Summer Lunch for over 30 years.

Peak District Holiday - 12-16 May 2019 - 22 have now booked. We travelled to the Peak District in August and joined Alan, Sara and Edward, the walk leaders, to reccé some of the walks and Tony and I went to Gradbach Mill to say hello to the staff and have a look around. We have put together a programme of stunning walks and with lovely accommodation, and a group of enthusiastic members of Sedgemoor Ramblers looking forward to a good holiday, I'm sure we will all have a great time next May. There is 1 double room still available.

All social events and holidays appear in the Social Diary in the front section of each programme and the dates are publicised with plenty of notice. It is always best to book well in advance, particularly where space is restricted and numbers are limited, e.g. the Summer Lunch.

PUBLICITY SECRETARY

This position has been vacant this year. Edward thanked Esme Gilling for her work with the "Local Reach" publication. Esme asked if others thought this was working. Jackie Morris said she had had 8 non Sedgemoor members on her walk from Apex Park. Jenny said there had been several new walkers who had come via the local reach articles. Tina agreed and said she had had several phone calls from the articles. Jenny said that the Bridgewater area had very poor publicity. Irene May asked if it would be worth contacting other Local Reach areas and that she would be happy to contact the Creech St Michael and Thurloxtton area publications. This was agreed.

5 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Edward stated that all serving members of the committee were willing to stand again and asked if it was acceptable to deal with these posts as a whole.

Proposer - Tony Fawle Seconded - Carole Baker.

Edward asked if anyone wished to take on the Publicity post. - No takers.

Irene May said that she would talk with Jenny, who said that the role would benefit a Co-ordinator role with a team of people.

Hazel noted that the Footpath Secretary was a joint role with her and Tina.

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6 GROUP HOLIDAYS 2019

4 Night Spring Walking Break in the Peak District. 12th - 16th May

Following the success of the week-end in Dorset last year I have arranged another short walking holiday for Sedgemoor Ramblers' members with 3 days walking in the stunning Peak District and a choice of 2 walks each day.

We will be staying at Gradbach Mill, a completely renovated mill steeped with history and heritage dating back to the spinning days of the late 1700's situated on the banks of the River Dane in the Peak District National Park. This hotel offers luxury accommodation and a great place to relax after a day's walking. A preferential group package has been arranged.

Speak to Jenny about this holiday.

Isle of Man 10th - 17th June.

We are returning to the Isle of Man as it proved so popular on our visit in 2010. We will be flying from Bristol by Easyjet to the island and will be staying in Douglas at the Lansdowne Guesthouse on a B&B basis. This island has an excellent transport system covering buses, the steam railway from Douglas to Port Erin, the electric railway from Douglas to Ramsey including the branch line to the summit of Snaefell and the horse drawn tram along the Douglas seafront. We will make use of all of these to get to and from walks at different places on the island. Evening meals will be taken locally in pubs and restaurants in Douglas.

Some members have already booked but there is still some accommodation available in the guesthouse.

Speak to Ed about this holiday.

Eastbourne Sussex. 2nd - 9th September

I know this area well as I lived in Eastbourne for 25 years and regularly walked on the South Downs between Eastbourne and Brighton. This holiday will be based at Shearings Burlington Hotel on the seafront opposite the pier and bus stops.

Accommodation will be on half board basis. The holiday will be on a self booking basis whereby individuals book their own rooms at the hotel and make their own way between Somerset and Eastbourne. There are frequent buses running across the downs to Brighton and these will be used to get to and from walks. If you have a concessionary travel card it can be used thus giving free transport to and from walks.

Speak to Ed about this walk

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jenny asked for an update on the new website, was it live yet? Ed said not quite. The committee had seen the template at the last meeting and had made some comments / adjustments which are being addressed but Mike Thomsett has other commitments at present. Ed said the site has extra functions from the previous e.g. a google directions to walk start point from your location.

Meeting closed 14:15