

## SEVERNSIDE RAMBLERS GROUP

### Minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at The Jubilee Hall, Alveston

**Present** Sue Bowerman, Helen Briggs, Allan Davies (Footpath Officer), Sue Driver (Publicity), Chris Everett (Secretary), Chris Gaymer, Joy Harrison (Walks Co-ordinator), Pauline Hart, Gill King (Social Secretary), Tony Kite, Ann Light, Ken Mill (Web Master), Janet Milne, Carolyn Muston, Robert Muston, Mike Norman, Andy Pearson, Peter Randall (Treasurer), Heather Rickards (Chairman), Chris Roberts, Irene Skeates, Kathy Strawbridge, Ellie Townsend, Jean Williams

Copies of the Agenda, Minutes of 2012 AGM, and Accounts were circulated to those present.

**1.13 Introduction** Chairman Heather Rickards welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Andy Pearson and Chris Everett for leading the walk prior to the meeting.

**2.13 Apologies for absence** were received from Jean Aellen, Jenny Aspinall, Gill James, John Lewis, Joyce Powell and Jo Wall.

**3.13 Minutes of previous meeting** held on 18 November 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record. Chris Gaymer proposed and Janet Milne seconded that the minutes be accepted.

#### **4.13 Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2012 AGM**

**4.12 5.11 (vi) Amendment to walks preview calendar on website** – boxes for Short / Long walks. Following further review, this was not actioned as it looked messy. It was decided that it was not necessary.

**5.12 (vi) Walks Programme Coordinator** - email acknowledgement of walks following submission. This has been actioned, so that leaders know that the walk has been submitted successfully even when a delay occurs before publication on the website.

**5.12 (vii) Web Editor** – addition of 'Town' box to 'submit a walk' form to aid walks coordinator. This has been actioned.

**7.12 (i) Coach Trip:** The coach trip to Lynton and Lynmouth which took place on September 8<sup>th</sup> was successful. Almost fully subscribed, all participants enjoyed the day.

**7.12 (ii) Go Ape or Canoeing down the Wye:** The amount of interest shown did not merit further organisational efforts.

**7.12 (iii) Skittles and Quiz Night:** The Skittles Night at Hallen on 9 March and the Quiz Night at Filton Golf Club on 8 November were both enjoyable, well attended evenings. Thanks were given to Gill for organising them and to Andy Pearson for the quiz.

**7.12 (iv) Map Reading course and follow up** did not take place. Janet Milne suggested that it be put on the calendar for next year.

**ACTION: Chris Everett**

**7.12 (v) Photography evening:** Andy Pearson conducted an evening at his home on 28 February.

**7.12 (vi) Group holiday abroad:** Further consideration to be given by committee.

**ACTION: Committee Members**

#### **5.13 Officers' Reports**

##### **(i) Chairman**

Severnside Ramblers Group has had a good year. We have battled with rain, with mud and also with heat waves, but we have had a good time. We have welcomed new faces and have lost some dear ones.

This year we have enjoyed two walking holidays, a coach trip to Exmoor, train walks with Wessex Wanderers and various social events. And many walks!

I want to thank all the members of the Severnside Ramblers Group. The committee members are wonderful, and so are the walk leaders, but just by joining us on a walk you are contributing to its success. Even members who don't come on walks are paying their subscription and the money is put to good use. So a big thank you to you all.

Walk leaders work hard. They have to find a walk, test it out, submit it to the programme, rewalk it and then lead the group. Their efforts are appreciated and I am pleased that many people thank the leader at the end of a walk.

I wish to record my gratitude to the members of the committee. Chris Everett, as secretary, has the most time consuming job and somehow fits it into her busy life of holidays and grandchildren. Peter deals very efficiently with finance. Ken keeps the website up to date, attractive and informative. Joy has the daunting task of producing the walks programme and coaxing more walks from us all. Gill oversees an exciting mixture of holidays and social events and famously makes a profit, and Sue uses various ways to publicise our activities. Allan as footpath officer has the unenviable task of liaising with various groups that deal with footpath upkeep. It is a job that needs volunteers, time and tools and there is a lack of all three! Mike, with Ken, organised the very successful coach trip to Exmoor with a choice of walks. Chris Gaymer has been a useful link with the Avon Area Committee, and Carolyn and Robert complete the team and have hosted our committee meetings. Thank you.

I am very pleased to say that most of the members of the committee are happy to stand for another year. This does not prevent us from hoping that new faces will join us. We ARE very sorry that Carolyn and Robert are standing down this year, and hope they might join again in the future. Next year, several of us will be leaving the committee, and we will be on the look-out for willing replacements! The Severnside Ramblers Committee is a good place to be! Think about joining it!

*Heather Rickards, Chairman*

#### **(ii) Secretary / Membership Secretary**

Since the last AGM we have seen numbers drop in our group from 164 last November to 148 at the present date. Although this seems a large reduction, the majority of those leaving have not walked with the group for a long time if ever, and others are accounted for by house moves, ill health and time constraints. Where we followed up resignations or lapses to find a reason, the response was universally positive towards Severnside, but cited other reasons for leaving. We tragically also lost a valued member, Pauline Smith, who continued to walk with the group until shortly before her death in March this year. Severnside demonstrated their respect and affection for Pauline with a large showing at her funeral.

On the plus side, we have welcomed several active and participatory new members to the group. The Friday Ambles and evening season in particular have introduced several people new to walking to the pleasures of joining our group. We have maintained an active core of members who lead and join in walks and social events. Of course, Ramblers as a whole lose the income benefit from the reduction in membership, but our group remains largely unaffected.

Fortunately we have experienced few accidents through the year. One member was unfortunate enough to break her ankle on a Friday amble during the winter, and we continue to wish her well in her recovery from that, but the rest of us have escaped the odd slip and fall with only dented pride.

We have continued to encourage members to receive copies of the programme through email as this saves us significant amounts of money on postage. However, it is recognised that the yellow printed copy is preferred by many and so we are now having extra copies of the programme printed and distributing them on walks to anyone requesting them.

*Chris Everett, Group Secretary*

#### **(iii) Treasurer**

Audited accounts presented separately, summary included at end of minutes. Annual subscription from members is largely used by Ramblers charity for the purpose of retaining footpaths, and legal fees will account for a high proportion

of that. We request more than the basic allocation from Area, and the amount we receive is not known in advance. Social activities generally raise a profit thanks to Gill King's efforts.

*Peter Randall, Treasurer*

#### **(iv) Footpaths Officer**

##### ***Footpath problems reported to South Glos.in 2013***

###### **1st March Easter Compton**

Report of a footpath from the village centre blocked by electronic gate.  
Asked to report it via South Glos website.

###### **9th March Michaelwood Services**

Report of blocked footpath near Michaelwood Services. Walker was using an old map. Emailed him a copy of OS map snipped from Streetmap which was more up-to-date than his map and showed a diversion of the ROW (Walker signed email as Bsc, (Hons) MRICS Chartered Surveyor).

###### **23 August Frome Valley Walkway**

From Geoff Mullett. Two fences have been erected across the footpath. Reported to South Glos. Wessex Water removing fence as of 23rd September. They were well out of time with the temp closure and were illegally obstructing the path. They have been asked to install a kissing gate.

###### **5th September Littleton-on-Severn**

Various stiles reported un-sound and Berkeley Hunt untrained foxhound puppies "bothered" Bristol Naturalists' Society members on a Natural History Walk.

South Glos have contacted the landowner and asked him to repair the stiles and cut back the overhanging vegetation. BNS member contacted BH himself.

Any problem encountered on footpaths such as broken stiles and blockages can be reported to Allan who will then pursue it through the appropriate channels.

##### ***CROW Act (Countryside and Rights of Way)***

This covers uncultivated land opened for public access. The automatic legal extinguishment of pre-1949 rights of way which had not been recorded on definitive maps by 31 December 2025 is starting to engage the Ramblers Association. If you know, or think you know of any footpaths that are not on record please pass full details on to me or Ramblers via their website.

##### ***Footpath Maintenance***

Our group has no-one at present with the time, commitment and training required to undertake footpath maintenance.

*Allan Davies, Footpath Officer*

#### **(v) Publicity Officer**

Local magazines are advertising our walks in their monthly local magazines with no charge. On the occasional month when our walks have not been advertised, it has been due to local activities taking priority causing them to run out of space.

The Observer newspaper - during the summer months our walks were not regularly advertised and again this was due to other activities, which were seasonal taking up free space.

Suggestions would be welcome on publicity, how we could improve our advertising and attract new walkers.

Talking to other groups on publicity, most groups are saying that the website is where they are gaining new members.

This brings us to the subject of 'blogs', which is writing up a diary of an event, walk about Severnside Ramblers. Ramblers have approached us with a view to submitting articles to be edited and published on their national website. If anybody feels they would like to contribute in this way, they can do so. Ken has researched the subject of 'blogs' and will raise the possibility of hosting our own in his report.

The WI Falfield Group contacted me in the summer, informing me of the "Summer Cream Teas" being held in the area. It was too late for this year to arrange a cream tea walk, due to the walks programme being printed. Is there a volunteer leader, to plan a route in the Falfield area and include a detour for a cream tea?

If a leader is interested then please contact me and I will find out dates and venue.

*Sue Driver, Publicity Officer*

**(vi) Walks Programme Coordinator**

It has been an exciting year for walks – lots of different lengths and interesting locations. Some so good, they even took place in the pouring rain. In fact the bigger problem with walk cancellations this year has been the sun rather than the rain. So thanks to leaders and helpers, including offerings from new leaders. The coach trip to Lynton/Lynmouth was another great success – roll on next year – how about 'The Gower'. Keep up the good work and the good ideas. Remember I will need walks for the February to May 2014 programme by early January.

*Joy Harrison, Walks Co-ordinator*

**(vii) Social Secretary**

The 2013 Xmas Walk and Lunch was held in the Forest of Dean. After a 3mile walk in snow and ice we gathered for lunch in the pub at Mosley Green. The next social event on the calendar was the Skittles Evening at the King William in Hallen. As in previous years a good night was had by all and everyone enjoyed the buffet style ploughmans supper.

At the end of April a party of 28 travelled up to the Elan Valley for our 2nd visit to the Elan Valley Lodge. Before we arrived at the Lodge the afternoon was spent at the Gigrin Kite Feeding Station at Rhyadar where we saw many Red Kites and Buzzards being fed. Once again we had a fabulous time at the Lodge with good food and entertainment in the form of a Pub Quiz and a Beetle Drive. We were taken on two lovely walks over the weekend and the weather was on our side for once!!

A second weekend to the South Downs was organised for early October by Heather and I believe a good time was had by all.

The annual Ramblers Pub Quiz was held this year at the Filton Golf Club which Helen kindly organised. After a hot meal our question masters, Andy and Chris, did very well in compereing the evening.

With 2013 nearing a close I would like to mention that the Xmas walk and lunch is on Sunday 15th December at the Farmers Table, Tortworth, preceded by a 4 mile walk around the surrounding area. Also a weekend has been booked at the Simonsbath Hotel on Exmoor for the weekend of 10-12th October. This will be on a first come first served basis and a deposit of £25 will be required. Further details will appear in the next programme.

*Gill King, Social Secretary*

**(viii) Web Editor**

**Website**

The website is maintained on a regular basis with regular updates of walks, photographs and walking information.

The website was rebuilt back in March with very few problems after it went live.

Many thanks to our members who have provided photos of our walks over the last year. The photos help to showcase the range of walks and the areas we visit and the photos are the most popular pages viewed on the website.

The photos are hosted separately from our website via the PhotoBucketimage and video hosting service. Over the last year we have started using a free programme called Dropbox, a file sharing application which is used for transferring photos. To use this service it is necessary to set up an account with Dropbox. This avoids sending large files by e-mail.

Hosting of our site has remained with 123-Reg over the last year and there have been very few problems to report.

### **Social Media**

I have recently set up a Facebook page for Severnside Ramblers. The site can be used for uploading photos, posting comments about our walks and generally showcasing Severnside. For those members with a Facebook account the page can be accessed from the homepage of our website via the button on the bottom of the page.

Our website will remain the primary source of information relevant to our group.

### **Feedback**

I am always interested in feedback and any news items to add to the site. The reporting of any broken links would be very helpful.

Links:

Photobucket	<a href="http://www.photobucket.com">www.photobucket.com</a>
Dropbox	<a href="http://www.dropbox.com">www.dropbox.com</a>
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>

*Ken Mill, Web Editor*

It had been suggested that Severnside might want to host its own 'blog'. Ken then read out the following prepared by his daughter, Claire.

*'For a blog to be worthwhile, it must be kept updated regularly, ideally twice a week at least, but certainly at least weekly. If visitors to the website go to the blog and find only posts that are weeks, or worse months, old it will likely reflect badly on the website, and potentially the group in general as simply not being up to date. Clearly the website itself is updated very frequently, so a blog that's not updated regularly, won't look very good.*

*With something like the Severnside group, I would suggest blog posts would be best served talking about the walks that have already taken place, possibly gathering ideas for future events be it social or walking related, or maybe the occasional post about the various people who make the Severnside group run, and why they're involved. But no matter the content, it's likely to require several people to be willing to commit to posting items on a regular basis. It is not a job to be taken on lightly, as it can take a lot of work to post just one blog post.*

*The Severnside website is full of everything interested people need to know, with plenty of access to photos that probably do the best job of communicating the actions and nature of the group. A Facebook page, if enough of the core group use Facebook and make use of such a page, would be far easier to run, and far more likely to help appeal to new people interested in joining the group.*

*Simply:*

**Pro:** *If (and this would be a Must) regularly updated, then potentially it would help start a dialogue with potential new members, and possibly benefit those already involved.*

**Con:** *It takes a lot of work to constantly have new content for a blog, several hours a week at the very least.*

- *The likelihood of bringing in new members, or even giving existing members something they don't already feel they have, through use of a blog is very minimal in such a localized area.*
- *If the posts are not kept up to date, it could be a negative for the site, and group, in general.*
- *What content would it involve? Anything such as walk dates, details, or photos are fairly pointless as it's already all on the website.*

*Blogs are wonderful things for sharing views and opinions on topics of pretty much any nature. They're great for sharing book/film/tv/food reviews or discussions. They're great for bigger companies, for a local example, Westonbirt, to share views and opinions, updates of various projects, from several different people. Maybe even sharing things such as gardening tips, or promoting up coming special events.*

*But for a group such as Severnside, with a relatively restricted appeal, it's likely to add very little, if anything, to the website as a whole. And it will be a lot of work to take on for such a reason. At this point, I would suggest a blog is not something that would benefit the group at this time.'*

Thanks were expressed to Claire for her contribution and a vote was taken as to whether Severnside should host a blog at this time. The vote was unanimous against, with a few abstentions. Robert Muston proposed that we might start by submitting entries to the national Rambler's blog, and in a few years time when the demographics of the group will have changed, the subject could be revisited. Sue Driver seconded the proposal.

### 6.13 Possible Events for 2014

- (i) **Coach Trip:** following the success of the outing to Lynton & Lynmouth in September various possible venues including the Gower and a return to Lynmouth/Lynton. Tony Kite offered to organise walks in the Exmouth area which he was familiar with, and Ellie Townsend offered to help organise it.

**ACTION: Ellie Townsend & Tony Kite**

- (ii) **Map Reading** course and follow up would be scheduled for October / February as previously discussed.

**ACTION: Janet Milne**

- (iii) **Bowling at Hollywood Bowl:** A show of hands indicated sufficient interest to warrant investigation.

**ACTION: Gill King**

- (iv) **Geo-caching:** Helen Briggs suggested that this might be of interest to members if the club had any members with expertise in the subject who would be willing to lead. Chris Everett offered to approach a member who is known to take an interest in it.

**ACTION: Chris Everett**

### 7.13 Retirement of current Committee Members

The Committee retired. Heather thanked Carolyn and Robert Muston for their contributions to the committee over the past year and expressed her regret that they were leaving. Helen Briggs then took the chair for the election of the new committee. Those that were re-standing were re-elected en bloc. Two new members volunteered at the meeting and were co-opted onto the committee.

### 8.13 Election of Honorary Officers and Committee Members

The following appointments were made:

Position	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	Heather Rickards*	Janet Milne	Jean Williams
Group Treasurer	Peter Randall*		
Group Secretary / Membership Secretary	Chris Everett*		
Group Publicity Officer	Sue Driver*		
Footpath Secretary	Allan Davies*		
Walks Coordinator	Joy Harrison*		

Group Web Editor	Ken Mill*		
Social Secretary	Gill King*		
General Committee Member	Mike Norman*		
General Committee Member	Chris Gaymer*		
General Committee Member	Jean Williams	Pauline Hart	Ann Light
General Committee Member	Ann Light	Heather Rickards	Janet Milne

\* Denotes Committee member during 2012/13

**9.13 Appointment of a representative to the governing body of the Area**

Ann Light read out notes explaining the functions and workings of Avon Area and following this, with no single person volunteering to take on the role, it was agreed that Chris Gaymer, Ann Light and Joy Harrison would share the role and attend Area meetings when they could.

**10.13 Appointment of Independent Examiner or Examiners:** It was agreed that the present arrangement should continue whereby the Group utilised a colleague of Ken Mill's to audit the accounts.

**ACTION: Ken Mill**

**11.13 Any Other Urgent Business**

(i) **Use of emails.** Ann Light warned that she had recently been the victim of hacking, whereby an email was sent from her account to all her contacts requesting money, and an elderly relative had been defrauded of a substantial amount of money. Allan Davies also warned that there was an issue with emails sent between blueyonder and talktalk accounts, which sometimes were not received with no indication of failure given to the sender.

**12.13 Date of the next AGM** would be Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at The Jubilee Centre, Bradley Stoke.

Sue Bowerman expressed her thanks on behalf of the membership to the committee and Heather closed the meeting at 14.30.

## Severnside Ramblers

### Financial Accounts Summary 1 October 2012 - 30 September 2013

		2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>INCOME</b>			
<b>Group</b>	Group Funding	537.74	579.65
	Advertising	150.00	150.00
	Interest Received	0.47	0.61
	Misc / Cash	30.00	19.12
		<u>718.21</u>	<u>749.38</u>
<b>Social</b>	Christmas	521.00	208.00
	Events (skittles, quiz, trips, etc)	707.00	586.00
	Holidays	4,015.00	4,574.00
	Cash receipt/refund/misc	193.50	68.00
		<u>5,436.50</u>	<u>5,436.00</u>
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<u><u>6,154.71</u></u>	<u><u>6,185.38</u></u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Group</b>	Meetings	(191.87)	(122.05)
	Newletters/Publicity	(493.35)	(175.94)
	Walk Programme	(82.71)	(126.21)
	Admin/Other	(24.27)	(130.82)
		<u>(792.20)</u>	<u>(555.02)</u>
<b>Social</b>	Christmas	(214.61)	(239.20)
	Events (skittles, quiz, trips, etc)	(993.36)	(540.49)
	Holidays	(4,235.95)	(4,425.32)
	Cash receipt/refund/misc	0.00	(82.00)
		<u>(5,443.92)</u>	<u>(5,287.01)</u>
		<u><u>(6,236.12)</u></u>	<u><u>(5,842.03)</u></u>
<b>Net</b>			
<b>Receipts/Expenditure</b>		(81.41)	343.35
<b>Asset Statement</b>			
	Group Bank Account	485.03	680.40
	Social Bank Account	128.15	231.14
	Cash - Treasurer	7.50	52.49
		<u>620.68</u>	<u>964.03</u>

Prepared by: Peter Randall

Reviewed by: Ken Mill

Audited by: Ian Weston

Signed Ian Weston  
Date 21/11/13