

## Minutes from Severnside Committee meeting held on 3 September 2015.

### Those present:

Gloria Drury, Chris Everett, Chris Gaymer, Joy Harrison, Ken Mill, Peter Randall, Heather Rickards, Ellie Townsend (visitor), Jean Williams.

### Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

1. **Welcome.** Heather opened the meeting, thanked all for attending and read out a letter from Janet Milne and Mike Norman, thanking the group for the farewell get-together and gifts.
2. **Apologies for absence.** Allan Davies, Sue Driver, Gill King.
3. **The minutes from the committee meeting held on the 7 May 2015** were accepted as a true and accurate record by Peter.
4. **Matters arising from previous minutes:**
  - 8c. Ramblers have now corrected one of the reports.
  - 9a. Coach trip to Swanage was a great success. Ken thanked Jean for organising it so well, and Heather thanked Ken for walk-leading and helping Jean.

### 5. Feedback on Ramblers Development Workshops at Eastwood Park 4 July 2015 (Joy Harrison)

*'I attended two of these:*

#### **a. Big Pathwatch**

*Ramblers have divided up the Ordnance Survey into thousands of 1km squares and are inviting ramblers and members of the public to adopt one or more squares and analyse it. This is in terms of positive and negative features of public rights of way within the square – thus not all available paths in the square are analysed. A guide is available as to the relevant features and the relevant paths. This can be done through an app or through the website. I am aware of those who have had problems with the former – I find the latter very easy. One places the features on the map and then there is a handy gadget to measure the total distance walked. The aim is to act on what is found.*

*Some squares are specially noted – these are ones Ramblers want done the most. Heather knows which ones these are.*

*One has 30 days from adopting a square to completing it. One can always relinquish a square. More than one person can adopt the same square but only the first to adopt it has their results accepted.*

*Me and Heather will be having a day in the next programme to see what squares are available reasonably near to each other and then for the walkers who attend to cover all the paths in them. I think it is important to do this as a group. The project finishes at the end of the year.'*

Joy has completed 6 of the squares to date. Concern was expressed as to how ramblers intended to present the information received to local authorities. Ken sent a letter to Ramblers on 25 July requesting information on this, but despite chasing this twice, has yet to receive a response (see item 8g).

#### **b. Health Walks**

*'This is about the link between Ramblers short walks and Walking for Health. A number of differences and similarities were discussed. Examples of features particular to health walks are - free, accessible by public transport, aimed at the inactive to get healthy by raising the heart rate (brisk pace), regular, social, same place. Many projects across the country – South Glos has been doing a programme for many years now.*

*People who enjoy these walks may want to progress to longer walks. The difficulty is how to encourage them to join up with Ramblers. South Glos do now undertake their own slightly longer walks programme. Health walks are normally only up to about 3 miles and start from as little as 1 mile. We will have to see whether Ramblers can still offer something which the members of Health Walks want and do not have at the moment. This will entail looking at the barriers health walkers have about using Ramblers – the main one being that it costs money to join us. Ramblers have a special rate for those health walkers that do join up and that it is for their benefit/health and not just a means of us recruiting more members.*

*I am arranging to meet with the contact with South Glos – now with a view to what we can do to help for next year's programme as the current one ends in October. I would like to go on one or two of their walks for example. I have some example plans of what other groups have done to form this link. A co-ordinator of these types of walks was in attendance at the Workshop. We have previously tried to get walking for health walkers to participate with us which did not work.'*

South Glos have introduced their 'Stepping Forward' initiative covering walks of 5-6 miles.

#### **6. Report on South Glos Show (Chris Gaymer)**

A successful and busy weekend at the South Glos Show was staffed by 8 volunteer members over the 2 days and made use of Heather's gazebo. The weather was kind and many leaflets were handed out to interested members of the public. The event raised awareness of Ramblers and resulted in one new member to date. Worthwhile to repeat next year.

#### **7. Development of Forgotten Landscape Project (Heather Rickards)**

Mike Norman passed over maps and all the information he had pertaining to this before he moved away. Heather is going for a walk with Katy Skiafe, one of the organisers next Wednesday. We have a mention on their website. A nature reserve is planned to the south of Severn Beach and Heather proposed that we offer £500 towards an information board there. Ken seconded the proposal.

Part of the area covered by the Forgotten Landscape project is also on the Coastal Access project. Natural England are currently in negotiation with landowners concerning land between Aust and Brean, and the outcome will not be known until early next year.

#### **8. Officers' Reports:**

These were circulated prior to the meeting, but with additional discussion. (*Reports in italics*):

##### **a) Chairman's report. (Heather Rickards)**

*'Janet and Mike moved to Yorkshire very recently. Severnside Ramblers Group will miss them both.*

*Thank you Chris E for arranging a farewell party and to Chris and Andy for hosting the occasion.*

*Janet and Mike seemed very agreeable to the suggestion that sometime next year the Group could stay in the Richmond area for a long weekend and that they would lead the walks.*

*Jean's coach outing to Swanage was a great success. As always with our coach trips we had glorious weather. Thanks to Jean and Ken for leading the splendid walks.*

*In July I had a letter from HF Holidays asking for names, and postal and email addresses from all our members.*

*This "requirement" was because we are a shareholding Club affiliated to HF Holidays. I wrote to Ramblers Association and queried this requirement as it seems to be against our obligation to protect our members data. RA has confirmed that we can only pass on "details of our members who have expressly consented for their data to be used for this purpose"*

*The Big Pathwatch has been launched and is attracting mixed reviews.*

*Severnside has been represented at a Ramblers Workshop at Eastwood Park, An Avon Area gathering, The South Glos Show, The Forgotten Landscape Project and the Aust to Brean coastal access route.*

*After several years on the committee of Severnside Ramblers and 3 years as Chairman, I shall resign at the AGM in November. My thanks go to present and past members of the committee. You have all been a delight to work with and have helped to create the friendly and positive atmosphere for which our Group is renowned.*

*My special thanks go to Chris who in her role as secretary has somehow guided, reminded, helped and supported me through the last three years.'*

##### **b) Secretary's report. (Chris Everett)**

*'We were all sorry to lose Janet and Mike from the group, but wish them well and hope to continue to have a fruitful relationship with them in Yorkshire. Several inactive members have left the group over the past few months, but we have been pleased to welcome 3 new members: Marlene Bertagne, Richard Smith and Mary Wickman. Mary joined as a direct result of our S Glos Show presence. All 3 are active walkers, and our membership currently stands at 151.*

*I, too, shall be standing down at the AGM having served for 3 years as secretary. I've really enjoyed the time, thanks to the guidance and help of all the other committee members.'*

**c) Treasurer's report. (Peter Randall)**

	Income	Payments	Balance
<b>GROUP FUND</b>			
Opening balance			£913.42
	£789.97	£574.63	£215.34
Closing balance			<b>£1,128.76</b>
<b>SOCIAL FUND</b>			
Opening balance			£478.97
	£10,683.68	£8,059.44	£3,103.21
Unpresented cheques			-£2681.00
Closing balance			<b>£422.21</b>

**d) Walk co-ordinator's report. (Joy Harrison)**

The programme is full with no spare Sundays. A walk has been included for the Sunday where many of the group will be away in Selworthy.

**e) Footpath Officer's report. (Allan Davies)**

Nothing to report.

**f) Publicity Officer's report. (Sue Driver)**

Nothing to report.

**g) Web editor's report. (Ken Mill)**

**Website**

'Ongoing maintenance of links and addition of photos from our walks.' Please report any links found to be broken to Ken.

**Footpath Surveys**

*The survey of paths in the Oldbury on Severn parish is in hand. Many thanks to Andy and Chris, Heather, Chris Gaymer and Gloria for helping out with this task. If anyone would like to know more or help complete the surveys please get in touch. There are still some grids to be checked.*

**Walk Leader Training and Map Reading**

*We will miss Mike and Janet and the effort they put in to training our walk leaders. Mike and Janet have passed on their training package information. With a couple of willing volunteers I'm sure we can continue to provide training for anyone who wants to be able to use a map and compass.*

*I attended the Ramblers Walk Leader and Navigation development day on 4 July. It was a good opportunity to go over what makes a good walk, group management and a good leader. The navigation session was a bit disorganised all classroom based and could have been better supported with additional instructors to help out with using a compass and finding your way around a map.*

**Avon Area Walk Leader Training**

*From Area Chair - The purpose of this note is to gauge the feeling of Groups to the induction of an 'as required' Walk Leader Training Programme. Many Walk Leaders take their first walks under the guidance of another experienced leader, commonly known as the Buddy System. This additional training is based on the RA Walk pamphlet - Walk Leader training toolkit. The purpose behind this initiative would be to further encourage and support new walk leaders and increasing their confidence by:-*

- Giving an outline of the most important aspects of walk leading
- Encouraging new walk leaders to think about things from the walkers point of view
- Drawing attention to key issues, particularly physical hazards, weather, etc.
- Planning of walks
- Map reading and navigation, including learning how to use a compass.

Chris Everett replied on behalf of Severnside - Great idea, could be useful too as a 'refresher' for existing walks leaders. We have leaders here who would be happy to participate and help run such courses, though they would need to be local. The only danger suggested was that it could potentially frighten off prospective leaders by thinking they have to know everything. If the course is offered with no pressure to attend, then we are all in favour.

Do legal implications need to be covered too?

I've not seen any follow up since Chris replied to Kevin McNicholas, Avon Area Chair.'

The meeting was informed that Kevin McNicholas has now arranged a course, with a theory session in Bristol YHA on October 21<sup>st</sup> evening to be followed by 2 practical sessions on 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. It was thought that we might arrange our own practical sessions closer to home. Ken is happy to continue with the training previously undertaken by Janet and Mike, but would need help with this.

### **Forgotten Landscape**

'I've received all the information that Mike had put together. Heather will be meeting with the Project Officer to discuss possible walks.'

### **Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)**

'The last meeting was held on 3 July.

Topics discussed were Terms of Reference, election of Chair and Vice Chair, annual report, urban routes, Outdoorswest website and England Coast Path.

I mentioned the Ramblers Big Pathwatch project. Concerns were expressed over engagement with Local Authorities and how useful the information will be. Time will tell.

The next meeting to be held on 30 Oct 15.

There might be an agenda item to discuss the Forgotten Landscape Project.

### **South Glos RofW Liaison Meeting**

The last meeting was held on 15 July. I mentioned the Ramblers Big Pathwatch project and concerns were raised over lack of engagement with Local Authorities, survey data format and potential for RofW department being overloaded if there are a lot of path problems reported. SGC representatives stressed they preferred path problems to be reported using the Outdoorswest website which fed data into the Local Authority database.

I agreed to write to Ramblers outlining our support in principle but expressing our concerns over data presentation, potential to undermine the very good working relationship we have with Landowners, Cotswold Wardens, British Horse Society, South Glos Council and Ramblers Groups. A copy of the Letter is attached. In usual Ramblers fashion there has not been a reply or an acknowledgement as yet.

The next meeting will be held on 11 Nov 15. '

### **Letter to Ramblers**

Nicky Philpott  
 Ramblers  
 2nd Floor Camelford House  
 87-90 Albert Embankment  
 London  
 SE1 7TW

Ken Mill  
 57 Bakers Ground  
 Stoke Gifford  
 Bristol  
 BS34 8GD

24 July 2015

**Dear Nicky,**

### **The Big Pathwatch Project**

The public rights of way network is an integral part of the infrastructure to maintain a healthy lifestyle. It is vital that this network is well maintained and supported. The Big Pathwatch project is an excellent concept which has many potential benefits for the Ramblers. It is already achieving the first objective of getting national publicity for footpaths and the Ramblers.

*At the recent South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) Rights of Way Liaison Meeting concerns were raised by representatives of the Rights of Way Department, Landowners and Avon Area Ramblers Groups about the objectives and outcome of the Big Pathwatch Project.*

*SGC Public Rights of Way department has a very good working relationship with the local Avon Area Ramblers Groups and Landowners who assist with footpath maintenance and footpath surveys. Concerns have been expressed over lack of engagement with Local Authorities in respect of the Big Pathwatch survey and the data being collected and how the survey results will be presented.*

*SGC has an interactive website OutDoorsWest that is used to report footpath problems. This in turn feeds into the SGC database recording footpath issues. If the data from the Big Pathwatch survey is not provide in a compatible format there are no in-house resources to convert and input data onto the rights of way database. There is the possibility that Local Authorities could be overwhelmed by reported problems whether they are minor or major. Therefore there is the possibility that the Big Pathwatch report will be ignored. This has the potential to damage the very good working relationship between SGC and the Avon Area Ramblers Groups. It would be appreciated if a statement could be provided that outlines the survey report format and how this will be presented to Local Authorities and Ramblers Groups on completion of the Big Pathwatch Project.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ken Mill*

*On behalf of SGC Rights of Way Liaison Group*

*Copy to: Rights of Way Liaison Meeting Members*

#### **h) Social secretary's report (Gill King)**

*'Well the Autumn/Winter season is creeping upon us quite quickly. There are a few things organised for the coming season. We have the Selworthy weekend at the end of October which is now fully booked with a total of 27 people going. The Xmas meal is booked for Sunday 13th December and we are very fortunate to be given a tour of Kings Weston house before we sit down to lunch. This year we could probably book for nos in excess of 35. Hopefully we will have another skittles evening during January and the details of this will appear on the web site once booked. Would everyone like the same format as before whereby we do our own thing, or would a hot meal be preferred. If we have it at the King Billy they can do a special menu of 2 courses for £10.00. Jenny and John are organising a weekend away in April down on the Gower for 2 nights - look out for further details on the web site.'*

In the meeting it was suggested that the skittles evening should be towards the end of February to allow it to be advertised in the next newsletter and to give time for responses. The same format as before regarding food is preferred.

#### **i) Avon Area representative's report (Chris Gaymer)**

Chris is due to attend the next Avon Area meeting on Monday 7 September, when there will be discussion on the future of Avon Area News and the inclusion of children on walks.

#### **9. AGM 15 Nov 2015 and any suggestions from the committee concerning future events, procedures etc**

Arrangements for AGM are all in hand. Gill is providing the food and Heather is helping. Andy and Chris are leading the pre-AGM walk. Peter has arranged for a representative from Ramblers Worldwide Holidays to speak to us before the AGM.

#### **10. Any other business**

- a. Jean asked whether the policy was that Severnside members should always have first choice on trips before opening it up for others. It was decided that in order to encourage access to all, each place should be filled on a first-come, first-served basis unless the event was subsidised by the club.
- b. Geoff Mullett walked with Ken last week and asked to be remembered to the club.

#### **11. Date and venue of next meeting**

Thursday 7 January 2016 at Ken Mill's home 7.30pm.  
Meeting closed at 9.00pm.