

**Minutes of 19th Annual General Meeting of Severnside Ramblers Group, held on Sunday 6
November at the Mafeking Hall, Pilning.**

Present

Ken Mill	Chairman
Peter Randall	Treasurer
Joy Harrison	Programme Secretary
Gill King	Social Secretary
Gloria Drury	Committee Member
Jean Williams	Committee Member
Chris Gaymer	Committee Member
Andy Pearson	Publicity
Carolyn Muston	Chris Evert
Ann Light	Michael Doherty
Irene Skeates	Mary Wickman
Emma Smith	Joyce Powell
Paul Lees	Peter Spring
Christine Pankhurst	Robert Muston
Dora Toruk	Jane Davies
Sue Bowerman	George Whyte
Pauline Hart	

1 Welcome

Ken Mill opened the meeting by welcoming everybody, and thanking the catering team for sorting out lunch and to Chris and Andy for leading the pre-meeting walk.

2 Apologies received from

Allan Davies	Kathy Strawbridge
Jean Aellen	Jill Parkinson
Charlie French	Ellie Townsend
Dave Jefferies	

3 The minutes of the 2015 AGM were circulated and agreed as a true record. Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Chris Gaymer and seconded by Gill King.

4 Matters Arising – There were no matters arising.

5 Officers Reports

Chairman's Report

This is the 19th Annual meeting of Severnside Ramblers Group. We have been around since 1997, and some of the original members are still with us.

We have come to the end of another excellent year. We had our Xmas lunch at Kings Weston House back in December and we must have enjoyed it as we're going back there again this year. Many thanks to Gill King for the arrangements.

We have enjoyed a walking holiday on the Gower, many thanks to Jenny and John for all the arrangements. We're looking forward to our visit to Church Stretton. (Thanks Gill). We enjoyed our coach trip to sunny Sidmouth. (Thanks Jean).

We have also manned stalls at the Thornbury Library Walking Event, Thornbury Carnival and the South Gloucestershire Show. Many thanks to all who manned stalls, spoke to visitors and helped advertise Severnside. Over the year of course we have had many wonderful walks and a special thank you to all our Walks Leaders.

Again over the past year the Friday Ambles have proved to be as popular as ever. Many thanks to Jean Aellen and Jean Williams for organising the Friday Ambles and the team of Walks Leaders.

Leading a walk is rewarding, even if it is a commitment. You have to find a walk, test it out, submit it to the programme, re-walk it and then lead the Group. The hard work is appreciated and it is so nice that in this Group people take time to thank the leader at the end of the walk.

We have run a map reading session and new Walks Leaders have come forward to help share the responsibility of leading walks for our Group. Their help is very much appreciated. My personal belief is that there should be no pressure to lead a walk, but if you do want to give it a try we can arrange another training session. It may be that you prefer a less structured approach and would prefer to partner or "buddy up" with an experienced leader. Or even buddy up with an inexperienced one and work out together what to do!

Even if you never lead a walk, you are still supporting the Group by joining a Severnside Ramble. Some members don't even ramble, but their subscription helps to fund the ongoing effort of the Ramblers' Association to protect the thousands of miles of public footpaths.

I want to say a big thank you to all the members of the committee. They are all busy people with very full lives - but when it comes to the Severnside Group they are keen, enthusiastic and USEFUL!

We are not big on bureaucracy, we only have 3 meetings a year (plus the AGM), but everyone quietly does their bit and volunteer to do more when the need arises.

So thanks Ellie Townsend (our secretary), Chris Gaymer, (who represents us at Avon Area meetings), Peter Randall, (our Treasurer), Joy Harrison, (who sets up the walking programme), Allan Davies, (our footpath officer) Andy Pearson, (our publicity officer) Gill King, (our social secretary) and Jean Williams, Gloria Drury and Charlie French who make up the team.

You have all been brilliant - and you obviously enjoy your time on the committee as some of you have offered to stay on another year.

Four Committee Members are bowing out. Ellie, Joy, Chris and Allan have decided it's time to step aside and hopefully willing volunteers will take their place.

Do think about joining the committee. You would be on the committee of a very positive and successful Group.

Looking forward to next year. It will be the 20th anniversary of Severnside Ramblers and it's an opportunity to celebrate the ongoing success of our group. Any ideas for a suitable celebration would be appreciated.

Ken Mill

Secretary/Membership Secretary Report

I accepted the role of Secretary/Membership Secretary from the AGM on the 15th of November 2015.

Since that date, the membership has altered, due to various reasons, such as Members resigning or no longer Walking with Severnside. We did gain 6 completely new members, and 1 reinstated member.

However, with all of that being said, we currently have 144 members.

No reportable injuries have occurred on our walks and Friday Ambles are still very popular.

The year as Secretary/Membership has been extremely challenging one for me, trying to make sense of everything as well as coping with 2 x viruses on the computer due to the added traffic. Also errors in the printing process at source, which required hand delivery to enable members to get the programmes on time.

I have decided to step down, as I feel I do not have the necessary temperament that the position requires.

Ellie Townsend

Treasurers Report

As I did last year I have split the consolidated accounts into their respective areas of Group and Social fund, to clearly show the income and expenditure on both accounts, which I hope you find easier to follow.

Since providing the figures for the AGM I am pleased to report that all accounts have been audited by Ian Weston.

Group Account - £1,009.20 (includes £64.65 petty cash) as at 30th September 2016

- Funding received from Area during the year was down by £75 in line with our budget proposals and continuing aim to become self-funded by 2017/18.
- Advertising revenue from Ramblers Worldwide Holidays was the same as previously however commission receipts for holidays booked was nil as obviously no-one went on a Ramblers Holiday in 2016/17. Remember if you book a holiday with RWH to tell them you belong to Severnside Ramblers to ensure we receive the respective commission.
- The costs for printing and circulating the Programme and Newsletter increased considerably during the year due to increased printing and postage costs and major changes are being proposed to limit the number of programmes sent to members. Library programmes will continue to be printed.

- In essence income was down and expenditure up.

The balance at the year-end was down by just £116.84 and whilst the overall balance is still too high there is a sum of £500 that is reserved, for the “Forgotten Landscape Project” run jointly by South Gloucestershire Council and various other bodies, discussed and agreed previously at the last two years AGMs.

Social Fund Account - £460.52 (includes £54.25 petty cash) as at 30th September 2016

- There has been slightly less activity on this account during the year but we continue to break-even on each event and as such the balance remains relatively static.
- We have continued to provide a number of social activities and weekend holidays throughout the year, which seem to be enjoyed by everyone, denoted by the eager response to participate.

Role of Treasurer

I have continued to enjoy the role of Treasurer and as such I am willing to offer myself for re-election for the forthcoming year.

Peter Randall

Walk Programme Coordinator

It has been another good year for Severnside. There have been a variety of walks, which are well attended. There have been new walkers and new leaders. Help is always available for those who would like to lead but are anxious about how to go about it. It has been a pleasure to have organised the programme for the last 8 years – thanks to those that lead and those who receive the routes to produce a rich programme of walks. They have consistently filled the programme after gentle coaxing from me.

Friday ambles continue to thrive and produce large numbers. Sunday walks are to all sorts of places at all sorts of lengths/gradients. Chris and Andy seem to hold the key to the evening walks which end with a hearty meal at the end of the season. I have done one myself – any offers from other leaders for these walks would be appreciated.

I will continue to lead walks and be involved fully with the group. I enjoy walking and it is good for my physical and mental wellbeing. I am now dealing with the Railway Walks Programme which gives chances to walk in new pastures – please support this in terms of walking and leading. There are some of our walks which could be combined with that programme – see me about that if you are interested.

If you have any ideas for places you would like to see walks in – please advise the new coordinator. We want to lead where you want to go.

Finally, I would like to offer my best wishes (which I am sure is shared by all) to Peter, who has kindly agreed to take over my role – and that is despite being shown all that it involves. Good Luck Peter.

Joy Harrison

Footpath Officer

Nothing to report.

Allan Davies

Publicity Officer

16th April - Manned a display in Thornbury Library (joint with Thornbury Ramblers) which resulted in some contacts/inquiries. This was free so no cost/benefit issue (apart from 'man' hours!)

2nd July - Manned a stall at Thornbury Carnival - 'paid' for in kind by providing marshalling during the parade. This seems to have been of limited value.

6/7th August - Shared a stand at The South Gloucestershire Show with Southwold and Kingswood groups. Some useful contacts made but 'value for money' might be considered poor.

Ongoing liaison with 'Forgotten Landscapes' initiative to create way-marked footpath route in the Severn Vale - probably in the Littleton on Severn > Oldbury area. Also working with FL to sponsor an Interpretation Board. The one on the Severn Way at Whale wharf has been allocated for our sponsorship and we will have some text on it to that effect along with a QR code to our specification - probably a direct link to our web site.

Our presence on social media has expanded considerably with Ken overseeing a Facebook account as well as our very classy website. Also noteworthy is Peter Spring's photographic contributions via Facebook and his very own website. All of these (along with my own Flickr & Facebook efforts) being interconnected via web links which together provide an unmissable presence for all but the most challenged 'technophobes'! Mention should also be made of the Facebook and/or Flickr presence of Claire Cox, Dora Torok and Chris Gaymer, and thanks to all other contributors to the photo archives on our web site, however modest - they all add to the rich diversity on show, especially for visitors, who may be tempted to join us for a walk - if only to verify what a mad bunch we are!

Our walks continue to be advertised in various periodicals in the area and these entries are frequently mentioned by new walkers, the Friday ambles being of particular value for people new to country walking.

It would probably be difficult to relate the various publicity efforts to any resultant recruitment to our membership, but the ongoing regular advertising of our programme in the free press, along with our ever-widening web presence, would seem to be the most effective. It would be interesting to monitor the responses to our QR code on the information board once it's in place.

Andy Pearson

Web Editor Report

Website

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

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

Our website remains the primary source of information relevant to our Group.

Social Media

I have continued to maintain a Facebook page for Severnside Ramblers. I use this for advertising our walks and showcasing the areas we have visited by adding photos with links to our website. It is also useful for publishing topics of interest such as walking festivals, developments affecting rights of way etc. Please help by adding your own photos or favourite places to visit to our Facebook page.

Ramblers Website

We have our own page on the Ramblers main website see <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/group-finder/areas/avon/groups/severnside.aspx>

Our page provides an overview of the Group with a link to our own website.

The main aim of the Group pages is to provide a facility for Groups without a website to be able to advertise their activities.

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.

Ken Mill

Social Secretary

The new social year started with a well supported Xmas walk around the Kingsweston Estate and a very interested tour of the house. This was followed by a lovely lunch in a beautiful room overlooking the grounds of the Estate. By popular demand we will be going back there this year.

Unfortunately the ten pin bowling had to be cancelled due to lack of interested. This was the first social event we have had to cancel.

In April Jenny and John organised a weekend away to Parc Le Breos on the Gower. After the Friday walk the weather improved greatly and we had a very enjoyable weekend of walking.

The annual coach trip in July was organised by Jean and Ken. A coach full of ramblers had a fine day of walking around Sidmouth.

We try to encourage our members to come up with thoughts for social events so please see me if you have any ideas.

Gill King

Avon Area Representative

For those who may not be aware of Avon Area, the area acts as the interface for the groups with Ramblers Head Office. Currently the group comprises Bristol, Bath, Kingswood, Southwold, Severnside, Clevedon, Norton Radstock and Brunel/Brunel +. Meetings are held at various venues within the area, now three times a year, and for the last two years there has also been a summer

gathering, involving a short walk, food, and group discussion on topics affecting the group. Last year the subject of discussion was membership, this year it focused on the role of the Treasurer within the groups.

There has been much talk this year on what the Area can do to help groups. Area has organised sessions on First Aid and Map Reading, and the Footpath Group does a great deal of maintenance and repair work on footpaths. The footpath group has four teams of volunteers who liaise with councils where footpath work is needed. This is a valuable contribution from Area to the advantage of all groups, as without it councils who are already cash-strapped would probably cut funding for such work and we would lose our footpaths. There is discussion at the moment on using money for publicity, which has led to talk of a change of name for the Area. However, ideas for an alternative name are proving difficult, and I think we may be left with being Avon, though personally I can see nothing wrong with that! Avon Area News is circulated, usually electronically, and is available on the AA website. Attending the AA meetings has made me realise just how lucky Severnside are. Bath are currently without a Chairman, and several groups struggle to fill their programmes, We, on the other hand, have a full committee, and a full walks programme, with plenty of activities as well. Pat on the back for us!

I have decided that it is time I stood down as the Severnside Representative at Avon Area meetings and therefore will not be seeking re-election to this role.

Chris Gaymer

6 Finance

Peter presented a paper at the meeting outlining suggestions for the Group to become self-funding – i.e. not taking any extra money from Avon Area/Ramblers. The Group could save money by more electronic circulation of the walk programme, but discussion ensued as to how best to circulate programmes to those few members unable to receive them on-line. Money could also be saved by using the Ramblers own website, but this would lead to far fewer links and less information than is presently on the website. The idea of purchasing our own copier was also floated, and whether we could get programmes printed more cheaply.

Action – the committee to discuss in depth and come up with suggestions

7 Events for 2017

As 2017 would mark the 20 Anniversary of Severnside Ramblers, suggestions were requested as to how we might mark the event. Andy had suggested re-walking as closely as possible the original first walk, followed by lunch. It would be nice to invite as many original members as possible.

A coach trip to the Mumbles is planned, with both a long and a shorter walk on offer.

A walk with afternoon tea was another suggestion.

Action – Committee to discuss

8 Local Projects

Andy Pearson reported on progress on the 'Forgotten Landscape' project.

Ken reported that he was currently involved with a new long distance footpath, The South Gloucestershire Way, probably some 60 miles, using existing footpaths.

Progress was being made on the English Coastal Path, and developments on the Aust to Avonmouth link were at the stage of consultation with landowners on access rights. When the report is issued in 2017 Severnside will be asked for their comments.

Gill King mentioned that the Forgotten Landscape Project was looking for bird counters on the banks of the Severn, and training days would be held in November for those interested.

9 Severnside Footpath Work Parties

It was hoped to get working parties together to help South Gloucestershire Council with the upkeep and maintenance of footpaths.

10 Retirement of Committee Members

Ken Mill thanked Joy Harrison and Chris Gaymer for their roles in supporting the committee, and presented them each with a flowering cyclamen.

11 Election of Officers for 2017

The following people were elected to serve on the committee:

Position	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	Ken Mill	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Treasurer	Peter Randall	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Secretary/Membership	Chris Gaymer	Gill King	Gloria Drury
Programme Secretary	Peter Spring	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Publicity Officer	Andy Pearson	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Footpaths	Michael Doherty	Chris Evert	Peter Spring
Web Master	Ken Mill	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Social Secretary	Gill King	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Committee members	Gloria Drury Charlie French Jean Williams	Chris Evert	Ann Light
Avon Area Representative	Vacant		

12 Avon Area Representative

Position vacant.

13 Appointment of Auditor

Ken proposed that Ian Weston should be asked to continue as auditor, as he was willing to do it.

14 Any Other Business

No items of any other business raised.

15 Date of next Meeting

Next AGM would be fixed by the new Committee for November 2017. Venue would be the Mafeking Hall, and Heather offered to lead a pre-meeting walk and book the hall for the event.

The meeting closed at 1400.

Ken Mill

Chairman

Sevenside Ramblers