

SEVERNSIDE RAMBLERS GROUP

Minutes of the 14th Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 20 November 2011 at The Jubilee Hall, Alveston

Present: Ken Mill (Acting Chairman to Minute 8.11 & Web Editor), Pauline Hart (Treasurer), Jean Aellen (Secretary/Membership Secretary to Minute 8.11 / Chairman from Minute 9.11), Heather Rickards (Publicity Officer), Allan Davies (Committee Member), Joy Harrison (Walk Co-ordinator), Chris Roberts, Peter Randall (Committee Member from Minute 9.11), Don Ford, Helen Briggs, Irene Skeats, Ann Light, Joyce Powell, Andy Pearson, Chris Everett, Norman Clark, Sue Bowerman, David West, Linda Clark, Carolyn Muston, Robert Muston, Sue Keefe (Secretary/Membership Secretary from Minute 9.11), Andy Naftel, Pam Porter, Sylvi Garratt, Narinjan Singh, Chris Gaymer, Jean Williams, Ross McDiarmid

Copies of the Agenda, Minutes of 2010 AGM, Officers' Reports, Accounts and other papers were circulated to those present.

1.11 Introduction: Ken Mill, Acting Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the other members of the Committee. Jenny Aspinall and John Lewis the Joint Footpath Secretaries were unable to attend because of another commitment, and Gill King, Social Secretary was also unable to attend.

Ken thanked Andy Pearson and Chris Everett for leading the walk prior to the meeting; he also thanked Chris Roberts, Heather Rickards and Jean Aellen for setting out the facilities for the meeting and for arranging the lunch.

2.11 Apologies for absence were received from: Jenny Aspinall, John Lewis, Gill King, Sue Kessler, Cathy Healing, Helen Willoughby, Kathy Strawbridge, Janet Milne, Mike Norman, Jo Wall, Pauline Smith.

3.11 Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record. Ann Light proposed and Don Ford seconded that the minutes be accepted.

4.11 Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2012 AGM

Ken referred to the following changes that had been introduced at the last AGM:

- Changed frequency of newsletter/walks programme to cover four months (ie three programmes a year) - Minute 6.10
- Introduction of grading of walks - Minute 7.10
- Mileage contribution rate increased to 10p per mile - Minute 8.10
- Treatment of deposits for social events / weekend away - Minute 9.10

He asked those present if they had any comments or proposals in respect of these changes.

Ross McDiarmid asked whether there was a Group policy on the length of walks. Ken advised that the length of walks depended on the walk leaders. If there were more volunteers to lead walks the range may be greater. Joy stated that if anyone wanted to lead a walk but was nervous about doing so, the Group had a 'buddy system'.

Chris Roberts asked if the changed frequency of programmes had made any difference in the number of walks offered. Joy replied that with the first programme (February to May) there had not been any

problems but there had been with the next programme (June to September 2011). She also stated that for the programme February to May 2012 there were still lots of gaps.

Andy Naftel asked how the walks were graded. Ken explained that the Ramblers system of walks grading was used and this linked with the Ramblers' website Walk Finder. The details of the grades were published on the back page of the newsletter/walks programme. The Group tried to make sure there was a variety of grade of walks offered.

5.11 Officers' Reports

- (i) **Chairman:** report as circulated. Ken referred to John and Elizabeth Godwin on whom the Group had relied for many years to lead Saturday walks - they had led 66 walks. They were stepping down so there was an opportunity for others to offer Saturday walks. If anyone was interested they should get in touch with Joy.

Andy Pearson proposed a vote of thanks to Ken for his work for the Group. Ken had in the past been Chairman for three years and had taken on the role of Acting Chairman over the past 12 months.

- (ii) **Secretary/Membership Secretary:** report as circulated. Jean was standing down as Secretary and Joy proposed a vote of thanks for her work over four years.

- (iii) **Treasurer:** report and accounts as circulated. Pauline thanked Ken for his assistance over her first year in the role. Pauline referred to the accounts which showed the year 2010/2011 and the previous year 2009/2010. She explained that the format was different for the two years, that for 2010/2011 being simplified.

Pauline was pleased to report that the accounts had been examined and agreed as correct. The Social Account was very healthy. The latest bank statement showed a balance in excess of £500.

Pauline did not know what the Group would do with the money. Ken proposed that the meeting could offer suggestions in this respect when proposals for future events were discussed.

Ken thanked Pauline for her work. She had been on a steep learning curve with the Ramblers accounting system which was complicated.

Heather asked if there was any chance of Ramblers Central Office asking for money back from the Group because the Social Fund was so healthy. Ken referred to the Ramblers rule that there should not be more than 40% of funds in the Social Fund. Helen asked to what the 40% referred - Ken could not remember the exact rule. It was envisaged that some of the money would be used for proposed future events (Minute 6.11 refers).

Ken also advised the meeting that in the past, the Group had returned money to Ramblers for a specific project rather than it disappear into the general funds of Ramblers, but he considered the real need was to look after Severnside.

Chris Gaymer referred to the footpath clearance project that Avon Area was working on which could need funding from the Group; there were also potential training costs involved in the project.

In the past Group and Social Accounts had been kept separate, but current arrangements were that all monies were accounted for as part of the Group's returns and the Social Account had to be reported.

Ken reported that the Area Treasurer had kept up the level of funds required by the Area and Groups, and this had been accepted by Ramblers.

- (iv) **Footpath Secretaries:** Report as circulated. In the absence of Jenny and John, Ken went through the report. He referred to Outdoors West, an organisation covering South

Gloucestershire, Bristol and BANES. The web address was www.outdoors.org.uk (an amendment to that shown in the report). Ken explained the website provided information on walking, cycling, horse riding and running and provided interactive maps showing rights of way. The website was new and there were a few problems but it was gradually being improved. He thought that in the future there may be requests to check out walks available from the website.

Jenny and John were standing down as Footpath Officers. Ken thanked them both for looking after the Footpaths activity for the Group for four years.

Ross McDiarmid asked if the Group had any 'work teams' or if work was done by the Council. Ken replied that South Gloucestershire had an interactive report form and many problems were referred via that route. When problems were referred via Jenny and John they followed them up and 'chased' their contacts in the Council. In the past the Group had done physical footpath clearance. Avon Area was pursuing an initiative to set up a footpath maintenance team but this was at an early stage still. If anyone was interested in helping with footpath maintenance they should contact Ron Phelps either via internet or if they did not have access to the internet, contact a member of the Committee and ask for Ron's telephone number.

(v) Publicity Officer: report as circulated. Details of walks now went in 8 local magazines. The library programmes covered two months at a time. It was possible that the number of libraries available for advertising may reduce.

Heather referred to posters - she had some for the Festival of Winter Walks and asked those present who would be prepared to take copies to display in their local area to speak to her before leaving the meeting.

Heather also mentioned the Ramblers promotions for 2012 - one for Coastal walks and one for the Olympics. She had thought it would be good to hold a walk on the route the Olympic torch would take but unfortunately it did not cover South Gloucestershire.

South Gloucestershire Council was very interested in Severnside as part of the Government's 'Big Society' initiative. At the last meeting Heather attended with Joy the local MP had been present.

Heather concluded by stating she had done the job for three years and felt she had run out of good ideas. She asked if anyone had any ideas that they contact her. She would only do the role for another year so if anyone was interested she would be pleased to hear from them.

There were questions about the publications used: Heather confirmed she sent information to Bradley Stoke Matters and Thornbury Magazine but sometimes there was insufficient space for a detailed entry but reference was made in the diary of events at the back of the magazines. There were usually links to the Severnside website in the web version of the magazines.

Peter Randall suggested asking Bradley Stoke Council to display information. Heather asked Peter to talk to her about this after the meeting. Allan Davies asked Heather to let him have copies of the information she issued and he would liaise with Thornbury Council. Heather advised Allan that the Information Office in Thornbury already accepted the library programmes.

The Group had recently had business cards printed for members to give to non-members who may be interested in joining some of our walks - individual contact details could be written on - it was considered that some people may find it easier to join a walk if they had

already met someone. There were cards by the display stand if anyone wanted to take some.

Andy Neftal asked 'where is Severnside'. When he had been looking at Ramblers website for the nearest Group he had not understood where Severnside was. Ken agreed that it may be confusing and explained that in broad terms Severnside covered Severn Beach, Pilning, Aust, Olveston, Easter Compton, Almondsbury, Alveston, Patchway, Filton, Stoke Gifford and Bradley Stoke.

- vi) Walk Co-ordinator:** report as circulated. Joy reported that short, medium and long walks had all been equally well attended. Joy referred to those Sundays when there had been a short and a long walk and her view that one walk usually suffered as a result by not having many people attend. Joy proposed that short walks be put on, for example, the fourth or fifth Sunday of the month. There was a counter view expressed that the people going on a four or five miles walk would not be the same as those who would go on a 10 or more miles walk and there was no conflict. In addition volunteers putting on shorter walks may not be available on the fourth/fifth Sundays.

Ross McDiarmid said some people preferred shorter walks for various reasons and there had been a good variety on the Severnside programme but not recently. Helen Briggs stated that there were shorter walks available on Friday ambles and some Saturdays.

Andy Pearson suggested that maybe walk leaders looked at the walks preview on the website, saw a walk already submitted for a particular Sunday, did not look at the length of walk and then chose an alternative date for their walk. He proposed that the preview calendar have two boxes for Sundays - one marked **S** for short walk, and one marked **L** for long walk. It was agreed this was a good idea.

ACTION: Ken Mill, Web Editor

It was suggested that if there was an eight miles walk on a Sunday perhaps two walks were not needed.

Peter Randall asked if Saturday walks could be six to eight miles long. It was these medium length walks that tended to be missing from the programme. It was confirmed that Saturday could be longer than four or five miles which the majority had tended to be in the past. The distance was dependent on the walk leaders.

- (vii) Web Editor:** report as circulated. Ken thanked all contributors of photographs for the website and in particular Andy Pearson in his role as the Group's "unofficial photographer".
- (viii) Social Secretary:** in the absence of Gill King, Jean gave the report. Jean had forms for the Christmas lunch if anyone was interested in attending.

In conclusion, Ken thanked Allan Davies for his work on the Committee. It was Allan who had suggested and researched the business cards. Ken asked Allan if he had any comments to make in his capacity as General Committee Member 'without portfolio'. Allan said he thought the Committee was a successful team. The limitation of the Group seemed to be in getting people to lead walks.

6.11 Possible events for 2012: details as circulated.

- (i) **Llangollen walking weekend - 27 April 2012** Leaflets were available by the display stand for anyone interested in the weekend. Details would appear in the next newsletter / programme.

(ii) **Diamond Jubilee celebrations**

a) Jubilee Way: this was a linear walk and it was proposed that there be a coach/mini bus to take car drivers from the end of the walk to the start of the walk. Transport would be funded from the Social Fund.

Ann Light offered to get involved with this event provided it was not over the Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend. Jean reported that Jill Field had recently walked the Jubilee Way and may be prepared to be involved too.

b) Monarchs Way: it was hoped walk leaders would be able to incorporate some parts in their walks.

(iii) **Navigation event**

Janet Milne and Mike Norman were prepared to work on this for Severnside members who had been on the map reading training days. A suggestion was made that a company be used to put on orienteering training for which some of the Group's funds could be used. Ken reported the idea was to go for example to the Mendips and give each participant an area in which to lead part of a walk using grid references and compass. The use of an orienteering training organisation could also be considered.

Andy Pearson suggested that a combination of walk and geocaching could be considered.

ACTION: Ken Mill

(iv) **Coastal Walks** Peter Randall suggested it may be worth finding a Group which had more coast than Severnside (eg Swanage) and join them on their coastal walk(s), with the Group arranging a coach to take them to/from the walk.

7.11 Proposed changes to the composition of the Group's Management Committee

Details had been circulated with the agenda. It was agreed that the post of Countryside Officer which had never been filled would be dropped from the Committee.

It was also agreed to increase the number of General Committee Members to four.

8.11 Retirement of current Committee Members

The Committee retired and Chris Gaymer took the chair for agenda item 9.

9.11 Election of Honorary Officers and Committee Members

Details of the nominations received had been circulated and there was one additional nomination of Peter Randall for a position as General Committee Member.

The following appointments were made:

Position	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	Jean Aellen	Pauline Hart	Heather Rickards
Treasurer	Pauline Hart	Ann Light	Jean Williams
Secretary/Membership Secretary	Sue Keefe	Jean Aellen	Pauline Hart
Footpath Secretary	Allan Davies	Sylvi Garratt	Sue Bowerman
Publicity Officer	Heather Rickards	Joy Harrison	Carolyn Muston
Walks Co-ordinator	Joy Harrison	Allan Davies	Carolyn Muston
Web Editor	Ken Mill	Andy Pearson	Allan Davies
Social Secretary	Gill King	Helen Briggs	Peter Randall
General Committee Member	Jenny Aspinall	Joy Harrison	Jean Williams

Position	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
General Committee Member	John Lewis	Jean Aellen	Peter Randall
“ “ “	Mike Norman	Andy Pearson	Sue Bowerman
“ “ “	Peter Randall	Chris Roberts	Pauline Hart

Jean Aellen took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. She thanked Chris Gaymer for taking the chair temporarily.

Jean said it had been her intention to leave the Committee having stepped down as Secretary but she had been persuaded to put her name forward for Chairman. She was pleased to take on the role and hoped to live up to the standards set by previous Chairmen. She would look to the new Committee to keep her on the straight and narrow. Jean stated she was prepared to take on the position for twelve months only and hoped that with new members joining the Committee there would be someone else willing to take on the role next year.

10.11 Appointment of a representative to the governing body of the Area

Ken Mill had previously undertaken this role for the Group when he had been involved with the Area’s website. He would not have that involvement after February 2012 and had other commitments which prevented him from continuing as the Group’s representative.

The representative attended meetings of the Area Council and reported back to the Group Committee on the proceedings and how they affected the Group; they also represented the Group’s views to the Council in matters affecting the operation of the Group.

Jean Aellen was a member of the Area Council as the Area Membership Secretary but was not always able to attend meetings. Chris Gaymer was the Minute Secretary and had to attend all meetings. There was discussion about whether either of these could act as the representative. Allan Davies suggested that maybe Committee members could take it in turns to attend, depending on availability and dates of meetings. The new Committee would discuss this at its first meeting.

ACTION: Jean Aellen

11.11 Appointment of independent examiner or examiners

Ken Mill had in the past asked his wife Louise to act as independent examiner but had not done so for 2010/2011 because of the level of assistance he had given Pauline with the accounts. He had therefore used a colleague at work to examine the accounts.

It was agreed that it would be left to the discretion of the Committee to use either Louise or one of Ken’s work colleagues as appropriate.

12.11 Any Other Urgent Business

(i) **Sweaters/fleeces with Severnside Logo:** Helen Briggs suggested that perhaps the Committee could consider making available sweaters or fleeces with the Severnside logo. She did not know what this would cost.

ACTION: Committee to review

(ii) **Need to carry First Aid Kit:** Ken reminded those present of the need for every walker to carry a first aid kit. The need for this had been demonstrated recently when a lady fell during a walk and broke her wrist. A combination of the necessary bandages in her first aid kit, the previous training of her husband and the treatment he rendered had prevented her having to have surgery.

There was discussion about whether it was appropriate to provide walk leaders with first aid training and whether at the start of a walk it was necessary to check if there were any first aiders on the walk. There was also discussion about the potential for litigation if incorrect treatment was given. Joy stated that an individual would have to have held themselves up as an 'expert' for any likelihood of successful litigation.

Chris Roberts suggested combining a social event with a talk from a Red Cross first aid trainer. She had a contact and would approach them to find out if they would be willing to do this.

ACTION: Chris Roberts

Sue Bowerman referred to first aid training for members. Jean expressed doubts about this because unless the skills were used they were generally forgotten.

There was a proposal to get walk leaders together to go through what was expected of them. A question was asked about the Ramblers view on first aid training, and what they may offer in this respect. These were matters for the new Committee to consider.

ACTION: Committee to review

- (iii) Inaccessible car keys at end of walk:** Ken reported on a recent incident when a member had locked her car keys in the boot at the end of the walk and had to be rescued by the RAC. The car was a Ford Focus which had a separate button for access to the boot. Ken reminded those present that at the end of a walk, when people were tired they needed to remain vigilant.

13.11 Date of the next AGM would be either Sunday 18 or Sunday 25 November 2012. The new Committee would finalise the date.

ACTION: Committee to review

Jean Aellen thanked everyone for attending the AGM. The meeting closed at 3.05pm.