

MINUTES OF THE GEDLING & DUKERIES GROUP RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6TH JULY 2017 AT 7.30PM IN THE MEETING ROOM RICHARD HERROD CENTRE

PRESENT: Mick Rawdin Val Disney Brian O'Neill
Brian Torr Alex McGowan Liz Pritchett
George Wood Pat Rogers
Heather Darwent Jim Norris

APOLOGIES: Graham Dicker, Jonathan Ankers.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

Proposed Brian Torr, seconded Pat Rogers, and passed.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Lowdham history walk had been cancelled due to lack of interest.

The allocation of certain postcodes to Mansfield Group has still not been effected. Val had e-mailed Head Office and was redirecting new members to Mansfield.

Brian Torr would investigate the closure of the Gedling Country Park footpath off Lambley Lane whilst the road is being built.

3. MEMBER'S REPORTS

Chairman's Report

It has not been a good period for the group since the last meeting regarding the health of group members. Sadly, John Marshall passed away on 7th. June 2017 whilst I was on holiday. John was a lovely man who, with his wife Dorothy, was a loyal supporter of the group despite their health issues over the past few years. John had been chairman of the group, a walk leader, and had organised the Christmas Fuddle event for many years. I started to walk with the Group in 1998 and the fuddle was running that year. His funeral was well attended by current and past members of the group.

Brenda Wilcox has had a serious stroke and the last I knew was still in hospital.

Graham Ware was re-admitted to hospital and is now in the QMC after being transferred from the City Hospital. The latest news is that he is no longer on dialysis. I intend to visit him again tomorrow.

Finally, Gay Wood's mother passed away last Sunday. I have sent her a card from the group because she has served on the committee.

I sent a card to Ann Staples from the Group following her recent operation.

At the next meeting in September we will need to discuss the arrangements for this year's AGM. We need to agree a date for reports to be sent to Jonathan. How many copies of the AGM papers need to be printed, and which printer outlet do we use?

Finally, at this year's AGM I will not be standing for re-election as chairman, as I will have served 5 years in the chair. It is time for a new face to take over the role. Hopefully, this early

announcement will give enough time for someone to take over. I have mentioned this decision in my article for the next programme.

Secretary's Report

1. At the Area council meeting it was agreed to ask Groups for their views on the organisation and purpose of Area Council meetings.
2. Vanessa Griffiths, Ramblers chief executive, met with Network Rail about our concerns with the closures and the consultation process. This was a good meeting with commitments made to closer working - which will be vital for helping us secure a good outcome for walkers as we go forwards. 15 of the proposed closures in East Anglia have been removed from the programme.
3. Results of the RA survey of members: For groups, the most frequently reported activities were:

1. Walk leading (100%)
2. Compiling walks programmes (97%)
3. = Finance (96%) = Governance (96%) = Membership recruitment (96%)

Regarding IT: Over 80% of areas and groups are maintaining some sort of database and the most frequently reported reason for doing this is to manage emails and other information related to members and other contacts.

The ability to communicate with members by email was widely emphasised as the most pressing need for future development, followed by improvements to systems for managing member information. 74% of groups and areas and 60% of individuals said improved member communications would be at least helpful. This was emphasised too in free text comments and in other interactions.

Among other helpful future developments were improved support for publicity and social media (68% of groups and areas), and a system for managing path problems (64% of groups and areas, 58% of individuals).

By far the greatest demand for training is around practical skills related to group walks: leadership, navigation and first aid. These three decisively topped the ratings in slightly varying order for both groups and areas and individuals, across all three countries. Other popular training topics were volunteer recruitment and paths/access.

Considerable concern was expressed by volunteers around communications within the Ramblers, at all levels and in all directions. This includes the effective cascading of information locally, the need to feed information back up the chain, and the need to communicate sideways, exchanging information and best practice between volunteers in different locations. There is a widely-reported perception that many groups, volunteers and individual members don't understand the wider mission of the Ramblers; that groups in particular don't understand the purpose of areas, and that staff and central decision-makers don't understand sufficiently how local volunteers work.

4. The RA is looking for volunteers from all over England to join as a Ramblers local organiser - our new volunteer campaigners. This is a really exciting opportunity to get involved with activities at both a local and national level on issues that affect walkers and the places we walk in. Details available.
5. July Area Council:

1. What do Group representatives want from the Council meetings e.g. to talk to other Group reps, to hear about national Ramblers activities, to know what is happening with rights of way work.
 2. How many actual meetings should there be each year? Currently the constitution says 4. If there are fewer physical meetings, should the papers still be sent quarterly?
 3. Venue - should we remain at Bilsthorpe Miners Welfare? This is a cheap, central venue and provides income to the Miners Welfare. If the suggestion is to move - where to?
 4. Time - currently 7.30 to 9.30 on a Tuesday evening. Should this change?
 5. Papers - currently every Officer provides a report which is a lot of pages. The principle being that the Officers are elected and should be held to account. As Groups don't have any other chance to meet, this was intended to share ideas. Should reports continue to be produced? Do they need to be more succinct, perhaps to a simple format as an aid in producing them. Would brevity help to sort the wheat from the chaff?
 6. Any other observations, comments, ideas will be welcome.
6. On the RA website there is an article which might be of use in our area: Home> Advice> Safety> Walking on military sites.

Brian Torr commented that, as footpath secretary, he was invited to the meetings.

Treasurer's Report

Balance £770.70, having paid for the coach.

A puzzling e-mail had been received from Ishmail. Brian had written to Jack Prust but received no acknowledgement. Jack had sent out a letter to Groups asking what funds we required for next year. The loss of members has resulted in a drop in the grant to £303.74.

Walks Programme Editor

Walks are coming in for the next programme. Brian asked if details of the agm should be included. These would be supplied by Mick. Pat would provide details of the Christmas fuddle.

Val suggested including the Festival of Winter Walks 23/12 to 7/1. Brian said he would highlight if space permitted. Val thought that we should push these events more and the website was suggested.

No other events would be included. We had 169 labels and 116 stamps, which should suffice. However, more envelopes were needed. **It was agreed** to print 300 as long as the terms from Marley's, £109 stapled, were the same. Brian said the quality of printing and paper was better.

Footpaths Secretary's Report

Nothing to report.

Membership Secretary's Report

30th June 2017

Total	216
Annual Individual	123
Annual Joint	86
Life Individual	5
Life Joint	7
Payments Pending	6
Members no longer in the group	2
New Members	0
Members Reinstated	0

There have been no new members since the Christmas fuddle, including events at Rufford and Go Outdoors, which is the worst performance since Val had been Membership Secretary.

The One Step Group was seen out on a six mile walk. However they were all young kids.

Mick said the Ramblers had an image problem. Marian Smalley's son belonged to the Younger Rambler Group. Val asked what happens when they reach the upper age limit?

The following discussion came to no conclusion. Not understanding the Ramblers ethos would be detrimental to the footpath network.

Social Sub Committee Report

The annual dinner went well, except for Mick, whose dinner was eaten by someone else! The ukulele entertainment went down very well. Mapperley Golf Club would be investigated for next year. There had been favourable reports.

A raffle for the coach was to be organized. There would be a limit of ten prizes for the Christmas fuddle to keep it short.

Coach Secretary's Report

One coach this year with 51 booked. 49 had paid and a refund would be given to Brenda in the light of her stroke. Mick had contacted Gibraltar Point and would hand over a cheque for £49 as payment to use the facilities.

Suggestions for 2018 include Norfolk and Stow to Bourton on the Water

Publicity

No report.

Area Liaison Officer's Report

This Report incorporates the Management Meeting on 4th July 2017

The Management Meeting consists of the elected officers. It has no decision making authority as a Group – decision making being vested solely in the Area Council. But it does discuss agenda items for forthcoming Council Meetings so that the defined actions have been carried out and issues addressed. The Meeting does not produce minutes.

Of particular significance at present is the forthcoming discussion at the July Area Council Meeting relating to the email sent out to Group Secretaries by Judith Anson on 31st May. This requested that Groups submit their views on the structure and purpose of the Area Council. There is quite a lot of flexibility on the running of the Council even without making any changes to the Constitution.

I am not able to attend the Area Council on 18th so this raises the issue of whether the Group wishes to make a formal response.

Another matter of interest is the Ramblers idea of inviting local MPs to come on a walk.

There was discussion on the subject of the Ramblers proposal for volunteer Champions. This is being piloted in East Anglia where it is specifically being addressed towards the issues of level crossings. There is currently little or no equivalent in East Anglia to our system of dealing with Rights of Ways Issues.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

The usefulness, frequency and location of Area meetings. Jim thought there were too many, as there was much repetition, and cost too much.

Jim reports to Area and votes on our behalf.

The Area constitution.

Feedback was requested for the next committee meeting.

Webmaster's Report

The website would be modernized over the next few months.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The name on the Walks Programme would still be Gedling & Dukeries for the present.

Alex asked about badges. This would have to wait until the Group name was settled at the agm.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 7th September 2017.