



RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION: NORWICH GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT HORSFORD VILLAGE HALL

SUNDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2024

Present were: Nigel Whitlam (Chair), Peter James (Secretary), Jonathan Wilby (Treasurer), Marita Bulto (Trips Away Coordinator and Communications Officer) plus 14 members and 2 guests

The Chair welcomed everybody and opened the meeting at 14:00 hrs.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Gerald Brooker (Walks Co-ordinator), Sarah Barney and Jane Edgar

Minutes of the 2023 AGM

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2023 were agreed to be a true record. Barbara Whitlam proposed they be signed and Sue Lankester seconded the proposal.

Matters arising from previous Minutes

None

Chair's Report

Nigel thanked the committee and minutes secretary for their work over the past year. He went on to thank walk leaders for their time spent in reccying and leading walks both in this area and on trips away, the Norwich Ramblers wouldn't exist without them. He also thanked all members for supporting the walks.

He extended special thanks to Gerald and Marita as Walks and Trips Away coordinators respectively for the significant amount of time they spent undertaking these roles.

Thanks were extended to Peter for the work he and the working party undertook in maintaining paths and bridges and to Sue Lankester for organising social events.

The group has offered some excellent and varied walks throughout the year and is always looking for new leaders, support being available from existing walk leaders if needed.

The 4 trips away have been a huge success with excellent feedback from those who have participated in them. The collaboration with individuals from other areas has brought significant benefit and hopefully will continue.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer provided the statement for the year ending 30th September 2024.

The bank balance at the end of the financial year was £1,623.82. Since then this has fallen to £1,480.92 due to expense payments for walk leaders on trips.

Revenue from Trips

For the trips in 2023 and 2024 a £5 booking fee had been charged per person per trip. Walk leaders on trip walks can reclaim their £5 back and in addition can claim for some expenses e.g. getting from where they are staying to the start of walks.

At the end of the 2023-2024 financial year the net revenue from trips was £902.48. Since then one payment has been received and a number of expenses paid or due to be paid leaving a net revenue of £764.58

It has been decided that the £764.58 will be disbursed to walk leaders based on the number of nights spent in the destination. This results in a payment of £9 per night spent at a particular trip destination. Two walk leaders have decided to donate their share back to the general fund for path repairs thereby increasing that fund by approximately £82.

Other Revenue and Expenses

During the 2023-4 financial year revenues for other activities such as path repairs amounted to £1,211.07 while associated costs were £1,415.77 leaving a deficit of £204.70 for the 2023-4 financial year. The overall net revenues for these activities was £726.34.

The main revenue sources are from group funding £607.07 (around 10% less than in 2022-2023); the walking partnership from trips taken with the Ramble Worldwide holidays which amounted to £570.00 in 2023-2024 almost 3 ½ times higher than in 2022-2023. Finally, there was a small amount of money raised at the AGM raffle of £34.00.

Looking Forward

One big change was the decision to discontinue the £5 booking fee per trip. It was decided that the fee whilst useful in some respects was fiddly to administer and could not remotely cover all the expenses walk leaders incurred in recceing activities for trips. Net revenues from trips now undertaken will, as discussed above, be reimbursed to walk leaders.

The original rationale for the £5 charge was to recompense walk leaders who undertake recces on behalf of Norwich Ramblers. Thus, for next year Somerset Ramblers will be undertaking recces in both Wiltshire and Dorset and, in some cases, expect to be compensated for doing this. The estimated cost of these recces has been calculated and will be, where necessary, paid from Walking Partnership revenues as group funding is ring-fenced for path repair, AGM costs, room hire etc.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed Jenny Lythell and seconded by Heidi Elliott

Secretary's Report and Membership

Membership is up to 539 from 521 with 5 affiliate members. 32 new members had joined in the last 3 months.

The group has had a very active year thanks to all volunteers who have made this possible.

Clarification was provided as to how to register which group a member was assigned to as it is of benefit financially that members are assigned to the Norwich Group.

Walks Co-ordinator's Report

Gerald had provided an update for the meeting, albeit he was unable to attend.

He wished to thank all the existing walk leaders for their excellent walks and would like to see more leaders to add more variety.

He wanted to encourage leaders to submit details of their walks at least a month ahead as this makes it easier to upload the information to the National website. Whilst it is possible to add details individually (and can be done by walk leaders) this is more time consuming.

There is a library of walks available if new or existing leaders are struggling to find routes, just contact Gerald and he will help.

Gerald also wished to thank Marita for making an excellent job of taking over the organising of the trips away.

Finally if anyone has any ideas moving forward please speak to Gerald or any of the committee.

Trips Away Report

Marita reported on the success of the 4 trips away this year. A total of 162 had attended these which were held in the Mendips, Keswick, Shropshire and the Peak District. Both the Mendips and Shropshire were new areas for the group and had proved popular.

The areas that the group visit are dependent on walk leaders / volunteers being prepared to visit in advance to reccy the area and routes.

The plan for next year is Keswick in May (with 62 people already interested), Wiltshire in June, Dorset in September and the Peak District (Buxton) in October.

Plans are also underway for 2026 with Keswick and the Peak District already being scheduled. Marita is always happy to receive ideas and volunteers to help with other areas.

The number of walking days on some trips away have been extended and this has also appeared to be popular.

Secretary's Report on the Norfolk Area Executive Committee

The area is active in many ways, such as safeguarding paths under the Rights of Way work and looking at the effects of the large solar farms in the area.

The working party remains active working on projects such as the boardwalk at Mannington and in repairing gates and stiles and keeping footpaths clear.

Peter reported that Broadland District Council is proposing to extend the parking at the woods between Horsford and Felthorpe and build a visitor centre along with toilets and a café.

The area AGM will take place at Upper Sheringham Village Hall on 15th February and all are welcome.

Election of Officers

Chair: Nigel was happy to remain in this post. He was proposed by Portia Griffey and seconded by Jonathan Wilby

Secretary: Peter was happy to remain in this post. He was proposed by Portia Griffey and seconded by Marita Coltrane

Vice-Chairman: there were no nominees so this role remains vacant

Treasurer: Jonathan was happy to remain in this post. He was proposed by Sue Lankester and seconded by Heidi Elliott

Walks Co-ordinator: Gerald was happy to remain in this post. He was proposed by Judith Thomas and seconded by Jonathan Wilby

Communications Officer: Marita was happy to remain in this post. She was proposed by Jenny Lythell and seconded by Heidi Elliott

Trips Away Coordinator: Marita was happy to remain in this post. She was proposed by Jonathan Wilby and seconded by Barbara Whitlam

Committee Members

Mark Lankester was happy to remain on the Committee. He was proposed by Sue Lankester and seconded by Xavier Coll

Nigel advised that ideally there needed to be at least two other Committee Members and after a brief update on the role of a committee member the following put themselves forward and were elected.

Judith Thomas who was proposed by Marita Coltrane and seconded by Jonathan Wilby
Barbara Whitlam who was proposed by Janet Bensley and seconded by Nigel Whitlam
Heidi Elliott who was proposed by Jonathan Wilby and seconded by Marita Bulto

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Jill Moates happy to continue. Nominated by Janet Bensley and seconded by Jonathan Wilby

Any Other Business:

Portia asked if the working party who volunteer for maintenance activities only do this during the week. If there was any scope to undertake maintenance at the weekend she would volunteer.

Sue Lankester was looking for help with social events. Heidi Elliott volunteered to assist Sue. If there is anyone else who may look to assist, please contact Sue if you can help.

Clarification about dogs on walks was sought. This is down to individual walk leaders who will be familiar with the route and would know about busy roads, livestock, stiles and other potential risks. If dogs were allowed they should be kept on a short lead.

The meeting ended at 14:47

Signed

Nigel Whitlam: Chairman