

Isle of Wight Ramblers Area AGM

Arreton Community Hall

11.15 Sat 30 January 2016

Minutes

Welcome by Mike Slater Area Chairman

This event covers both AGMs of Group and Area. This afternoon Tony Tutton will talk about the National Trust's Project Neptune.

Welcome to our two visitors from Ramblers Central -Alex Manning – Voluntary Treasurer and Caroline Wheeler Assistant to the Chief Executive of The Ramblers

Apologies for Absence :- Mr & Mrs Hunter, Steve Lockett, David Yates, Carol Henley Jacky Carter, Geoff Mason, Toni Goodley, Sandra Goddard, David Ballard, Pete Flynn, Susan Bradley, Maureen Phillips, Jenny Mitchell, Ian Griffiths, Eric & Anne Gilbert

Forty nine attendees signed the Attendance Book.

Group AGM – Steve Gibson

A moment of silence was held for those who had passed away during the past year. These included Richard Cook, Don Markham, R Norris, Debbie Holloway and Chris Lipscome. Richard, Don and Chris were Walk Leaders for many years and Don was a past Group Chairman. Chris was a Life Member and was a distributor of WalkTalk for St Helens well into her 90's.

1. The Minutes of the last AGM, held on Saturday 31st January 2015 were approved.

Proposed	Mike Marchant
Seconded	Howard Duffus

2. Matters arising from the previous minutes - none
3. Group Annual Report

The Committee

The committee held five bimonthly meetings during the year, with a sixth that was scheduled but was cancelled. The main responsibility of the group committee was to plan, organise and conduct walks and the social programme of events and to promote the Group externally at shows.

Group walks

The Group Walks programme for the year contained 189 walks, which was ten per cent up on the previous year.

One important development this year was the introduction of “Sunday strolls”—five-mile walks every Sunday morning from March to November. They were a great success with up to 45 people going on them and will be continued next year. Steve asked whether they should be scheduled throughout the year and there was strong support for this.

Our regular 15-mile walks continued each Saturday and a variety of 5 to 10 mile walks were scheduled on other days of the week.

Group Holiday and Excursions

Tim and Jackie Hough arranged a four-day spring break in Weymouth (20th to 24th April); two coach outings to Limpley Stoke and Bradford-on-Avon (9th June and 8th July); a mini-cruise to Guernsey and Honfleur in France (29th August to 1st September); and a six-day autumn holiday in Cheshire (11th to 17th October).

Socials

The following were arranged by Carol Henley:

In March at Wooton Community Centre, there was a short walk around Wooton followed by a Beetle Drive, and high tea, A social in June was a skittles evening, with an American supper. Our summer BBQ was held at the Shanklin Rowing club. 60 Ramblers took part in a walking quiz around the sea front and town, which was followed up by food prepared and cooked by Reg, Bill, Carol, Ann and Anna. The Annual Christmas Lunch had 65 booked for the Holmwood Hotel at Cowes and was a great success.

Shows

We had a presence at the following shows during the summer, arranged by Pam Dana: the Chale Show, Garlic Festival and Wolverton Gardens Fair. The stands were manned by volunteers, who numbered 36 in total.

4. Treasurer’s Annual Report

Jackie Hough reported on her first year as Treasurer. She gave her thanks to David Howarth for his support and training. She also had a training course provided by Central Office. She reported that the year had been a steady one and accounts had been published in the latest WalkTalk, signed by Auditor Graham White.

5. Election of Committee Members

The following positions were proposed, with all candidates standing for re-election:

Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Steve Gibson
Treasurer	Jackie Hough
Newsletter Distribution	Tim Hough
Walks programme	Steve Gibson
Social Secretary	Carol Henley
Committee Members	Pam Dana

Ann Pearson
Anna Willshire
John Rolfe

They were re-elected by majority of attendees.

Proposed Rio Bellgore-Gullit
Seconded Carol Crawford

6. Area AGM – Mike Slater

7. Minutes of the last AGM, held on Saturday 31st January 2015
Approved – proposed by John Hague, Seconded by Tim Hough
8. Matters arising from the previous minutes - none
9. Area Annual Report and The Way Forward for the Isle of Wight Ramblers

The report was circulated via email prior to the meeting and is also on our website. Copies were available if required.

You are members of one of the most successful Voluntary Organisations on the Isle of Wight

Steve has talked earlier about the 190 group walks we organise each year
Our Coastal Access Campaign has ensured that by 2020 the Island will have a complete Coastal Footpath

Over the last five years 126 new gates have been installed under our Donate a Gate scheme, and 350 footpath steps have been constructed by our Ramblers work parties.

Over 100 volunteers help with our charitable work.

The IOW Area has received 5 National Ramblers Awards, and our contributions to the Island have been recognised by the Queens Award for voluntary services

During spring last year Area and Group Committee members got together in workshops and meetings to review how the IOW Ramblers is organised and to identify a portfolio of opportunities for us to explore.

This resulted in a paper we have called the Forward Path for IOW Ramblers

Available on the website or by asking for a copy to be posted to you

10. Treasurer's Annual Report
We are in a healthy position, our biggest contribution is from Donate a Gate, circa £13,000. Gift Aid also generates over £2000, similar amounts from Publications, books and worldwide holidays.

Expenditure DAG is biggest contributor, Walk Talk next, but it is a very professional publication. Funds in hand are held against on going projects such as the East Wight Landscape Project.

Mike Slater re-iterated that we are successful, but this is all done by volunteers, so we always welcome more on board.

Approval of Annual Report and Treasurer's report
Proposer Carol Crawford
Secunder Rio Bellgore-Gullit

This month John Hague is stepping down from the Area Committee following 47 years as a volunteer organiser with the Ramblers.

John helped form the Northampton Ramblers Group in 1969. One of his projects in Northamptonshire was to establish the Nene Way.

Not as my Sat Nav keeps trying to tell me the Ne Ne Way.

In 1988 Jennifer and John moved to the Isle of Wight where he was soon involved in Island Ramblers work with people like Joan Deacon and Brian Evans.

For a while John was involved in what may now be viewed as discriminatory practices! He led two separate Ramblers work parties a month, one for the men and one for the ladies.

For several years John served his time as Area Chairman, that's probably when his hair started to turn grey.

He then had to master the 'ROW Bible - the Blue Book' as Area Footpath secretary. John has been involved in many footpath projects and campaigns over the years, including-

- Reopening the Chimney Steps
- Shalfleet
- Alverstone
- and the Coastal Path

Even though he is no longer on the Area committee John will stay active, he will still be representing Ramblers on the East Wight Landscape Partnership Project.

Mike Slater stepped down to allow David Howarth to propose Mike Slater as Chairman for another year. He has shown over the past year that he can bring a fresh approach to the way forward for the Ramblers

Propose Roger Mann
Secunder Howard Duffas

11. Election of Area Committee Officers- Nominations as follows:

- Chairman- Mike Slater
- Vice Chairman – David Howarth
- Area Secretary- Gwyneth Byerley
- Treasurer – Lyn Schofield
- Membership – Gwyneth Byerley
- Area Footpath Secretary – Mike Marchant

- Newsletter editor/publications Steve Williams
- Publicity- David Howarth
- Access officer – Rod Senior
- Countryside officer – David Howarth
- Volunteer Co-ordinator Jackie Carter
-
- These three new posts were elected
- Proposer – Pam Dana
- Secunder – Rio

The rest of the officers were re-elected en bloc

Proposer – Tim Hough

Secunder – Jackie Hough

12. Area Committee Members – David Yates (to 2018). John Gurney-Champion (to 2016)
Any new committee members welcome, please contact Gwyneth Byerley or Mike Slater
13. Appointment of Auditor – Doug Kelman -
Proposer Howard Duffas
Secunder David Howarth
14. Nominations for General Council representatives - This year the General Council meeting will take place in York we will send two representatives :-
Mike Slater and Rod Senior

Proposer – John Gurney Champion
Secunder- Carol Crawford
15. Discussion of Motions put forward and any other business
No motions have been received.

AOB

Footpath behind Fort Albert, has been fenced off – any chance of this being re-opened? This may well be addressed by the surveying for the Coastal Path

John Hague – Annual Walking Festival funding has now been withdrawn, could the Area Council consider what IOW Ramblers could do to help. Do we co-operate with Holiday fellowship? yes we do, we have a close but not formal relationship.

Question & Answer session with Alex Mannings Honorary Treasurer and Caroline Wheeler, Executive Assistant, Chief Executive's Office
Alex is Honorary Treasurer, Finance is key to the org, membership is biggest income generator. Membership Dept, Campaign Team, Legal Dept,

Any funds available for such things as the Walking Festival ? It is always worth asking via the budget process.

Training days are held nationally on a range of topics, emails from Central remind us of these, but they are in the Ramblers magazine too.

Confusion over who does what in the Ramblers – we have a Zen Helpdesk – which should be used for all queries, this will then channel the enquiry

We do have a display of books and maps for sale plus the full range of walks leaflets as you enter the hall.

13.15 LUNCH

A delicious lunch with a choice of Cock a Leekie or Mulligatawny soups with a lovely variety of breads, followed by Apple Crumble or Sticky Toffee pudding

Mike Slater thanked Tom & Jean Denoon for their hard work

Andrew Turner MP Q&A

Question – The Governments Strategy for Sport – how may this translate for us here on the Island?

Answer – Voluntary Organisations will hopefully be supported through this strategy. We on the Island do take full advantage of our freedom to explore and enjoy what we have.

Question – Fracking, both in general and specifically on the Island - what are your views?

Answer – The plan to explore here on the Island is more difficult than in areas which are more “open” Whilst AONBs are protected there is a risk on encroachment generally as land is squeezed on all sides

Planning should not need more legislation, but we need to keep lobbying our MPs .

Question – What about “normal” oil extraction?

Answer I would need to know more details , but I would be unlikely to object

Question – In view of the Council’s poor budget position and the fact that the ROW officers jobs may well be at risk, how could this be covered

Answer – It may well be necessary to recruit volunteers to cover some of this work Generally the Council is not doing a very good job, we will have the chance to change this at the next elections.

Question – As we have amalgamated our Finance, legal teams and our Police with Hampshire could this not work if the Councils were amalgamated?

Answer – Not a good idea we have more councillors pro rata and it should remain that way

Question – The Fort Albert footpath – could we use legislation to force the owners to open up the path

Answer – This would have to be done by private legislation, it is expensive and one would have to find a sponsor to do this.

The session drew to close, and Mike Slater thanked Andrew Turner for taking the time to come and talk with us.

Tony Tutton General Manager for National Trust on the Isle of Wight - Project Neptune

A fascinating talk by Tony Tutton about the way in which the National Trust looks after much of our coastline

We go to the coast to play, to relax and to connect with the natural world and the elements. Days at the seaside or walks along coastal cliffs are deeply engrained in our collective memory, and we need to cherish them.

- The National Trust owns 775 miles of coastline in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (574 miles of this has been bought since 1965)
- Golden Cap in Dorset is the highest point on the south coast of England
- The first ever National Trust parcel of land was a place called Dinas Oleu – a coastal slope overlooking Barmouth in North Wales
- In the UK, no one lives more than 75 miles from the sea
- The first coastal place acquired by the Neptune Coastline Campaign was the beautiful Whiteford Burrows on the Gower peninsula in South Wales
- Whiteford Burrows on the Gower peninsula in South Wales The Needles coastline here on the Island was acquired with the Old and New Battery in 1975

Date of the next AGM will be Saturday January 28th 2017

The Meeting closed at 15.30