

South Gwent Ramblers

Minutes of the committee meeting held on 3 February 2000

Members present - Ken Phillips (KP), Brian Williams (BW), Adrian Sheehan (AS), Fred Fee (FF), Val Clark (VC), Kath Sadler (KS), Keith Cooper (KC), Andrew Wilmott (AM).

Before the meeting started, KP introduced Keiron O'Hagan. Keiron is the newly elected chairperson for the Greater Gwent Area Council. He is keen to meet the committee members of the groups in the G.G.A. and listen to any comments they wish to make.

Apologies for absence from Beryl Beer

Minutes of last meeting The minutes were adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes

para 3a Before expenses were incurred the committee should be informed (KP). Journeys should be further than 60 miles round trip (FF). [Keiron O'Hagan noted that the RA allowance was 21p per mile].

para 3b **AS is willing to set up and maintain a database of walks.** Leaders should try to provide a synopsis of walks so that they could be included in the program or given to the Argus. **AS suggested that a form for the synopsis** should be provided. KP suggested that an exemplary synopsis be placed on the form.

para 3c done. KC suggested communication by email, but too few members are on line. KP suggested adding members to the 'phone circulation list. FF suggested that **leaders should mention this at walks.**

para 3d done. **A space for reporting problems will be added to the walks synopsis form.**

para 3e RC had twice had a new walker labour dangerously during a walk. KP suggests that a first walk should be a leisurely walk. FF thought that it was best left to leaders' common sense on the day and that the Short Walk be proposed if there is any doubt about the fitness of a new walker.

para 3f Beryl not present so no report.

para 4a(iii) A joint walk is being arranged. Gelli Gaer and Lower Wye may provide some leaders. RC asked about taking dogs. **KP will consult.**

[At FF's behest, the committee thanked BW for his work in recruiting the current committee - no mean feat these days!]

[Keiron O'Hagan wished to compile an area database of leaders and walks. Rambles Officers should consult each other about walks. As regards the fitness of new walkers, he said that some groups indicate the height and length of walks and classify them as an easy/strenuous /hard indicator. KS indicated that we grade walks and we indicate walk grades to Argus.]

Officers' reports

Secretary KP sympathised with the previous secretary Kath Cantwell about the workload caused by the number of documents from the various tiers of the RA when going through a list of items received. The following provoked comment:

AS to nominate walks as RA themed walks in the programme of walks.

KC wondered if members could be informed via email, but too few are on-line.

KP asked how the group members could be informed of the RA request to write to Welsh Assembly members about the Right to Roam bill. RC suggested that each committee member be encouraged to write to MP.

AS to note Area Ramble on 11 June at Parc Cwmdaren.

KP suggested that the RA should provide a list of items that they send. He could then circulate the list to committee members (FF with minutes?) to ask which they wished to see or consider. [Keiron O'Hagan will suggest this to the Gwent Area].

Treasurer BW reports a balance of £1989 (*cf* AGM £2018). The Christmas dinner incurred costs of £289.40 and income of £272 - a deficit of £17.40 which was spent on raffle prizes. When the balance is below £2000, interest rates drop substantially. Come May, BW expects a £2000+ balance, but if not he will consider coalescing the two accounts to maintain the £2000+ balance on one account. £20 has been donated to Tenovus as an earlier cheque for this donation was not presented by the recipient. A letter of thanks for the donation to the National Trust Snowdonia appeal asked for more money.

Footpaths Officer RC gave a brief report - see attachment. RC suggested donating £100 towards the legal costs of tackling a bad landowner who was harassing users of a bridleway through his land. KP suggested personal donations, but RC indicated that the time to collect them was not available. FF balked at another large donation from our funds. AS suggested that this case was much closer to home than some and that each case should be considered on merit: we should fundraise if necessary. RC and KC agreed that this case was on our patch and that in this case a donation should be made. **RC proposed a vote on making the £100 donation, seconded by KC and the vote was carried *nem con*.** A letter from John Ridley proposed a £50 donation for the Coed Craig Ruperra appeal. BW said that donations on this scale would bring the group to its knees in about five years and asked if we could afford it. A lot of income had come previously from unclaimed footpaths expenses, but this was unlikely to continue. RC indicated that he would not pursue the proposed £200 donation to Save Our Footpaths appeal (committee meeting minutes of 12 November, para 3g) and **suggested that £20 should be donated to the Coed Craig Ruperra appeal: the committee agreed.**

Rambles Officer KC said that except for one lost because of snow, all walks had gone to plan. AS reported that the new walks program was steadily filling and that the proposed weekend walking at Arundel has been organised. The Christmas dinner was preceded by a walk by Jill Griffin and KP thanked her for her efforts. A *rolling calendar of events* includes a trip to London for a guided walk by Eileen Dodd: assemble at the Hilton Hotel car park for the bus. BW asked if this trip was not too close to the Arundel trip, but KC and AS indicated that the opportunity was for that particular date and it was worth trying. **AS is to encourage more leaders and investigate leader training.** KC says that the Group has a leadership manual. **KP proposed a meeting to discuss the rolling calendar. The meeting was favoured and set for 7:30 on 8 February at the Civic Centre.**

Membership Secretary VC reports a letter from Sue Gitting asking for a 5% increase in membership. Membership has remained roughly steady, decreasing from 175 to 172. VC has written to lapsed members without response. Two have moved to a different area and there are four new members.

Anyone walking without joining would be sent a letter.

Publicity Secretary KS places announcements in the Argus and has walks programs in the Library and Millets. Of the local supermarkets, only Tesco would accept a poster. **FF is to make an A4 portrait poster for Tesco and to have 10 landscape posters copied at £1 each.**

Web site

KS has contacted various sites for them to link with ours and has registered with search engines. [Keiron O'Hagan will discuss the Area web site at his next meeting.]

Any other business.

The minutes of the committee meeting of 19 August were adopted. KC can get list of YHA guided walks.

Next Committee Meeting was not decided. **The dates of the next three meeting were to be set at the meeting on 8 February.**

[In a short discussion after the business of the meeting, Kieron O'Hagen said that he would take the following ideas back to the Area:

- Database of all walks.
- Leaders' training
- Area walks leaders

He asks us to consider:

- What function does the Area Council have?
- Do we want an Area Council?
- Would money from the Area better go to groups?

Footpath officer's Report 3rd February 2000

Diversion PF No 9 (part) St. Brides

Site meeting attended with Matthew Hamar, owner of Sutton Farm, Borough Councillor and representative from Caravan site. Owner agreed to install galvanised kissing gates which would allow greater access to the shore.

Diversion PF 18 (part) Caerleon

Letter sent suggesting alternative to diversion proposed. Particular concerns relate to the crossing of the railway line

Pentre Farm

Incident relates to group walk on 16th January Statements have been collected from walkers. These statements have been sent to Jerry Pearlman, R.A. Honorary Solicitor, and may be used at the court hearing in March. An official complaint is being made at Abergavenny police station on Friday, 3rd Feb. Letter received From Judith Cox

