

## **South Gwent Ramblers**

Minutes of the committee meeting held on

14 November 2000

Members present - Ken Phillips (KP), Brian Williams (BW), Adrian Sheehan (AS), Fred Fee (FF), Val Clark (VC), Keith Cooper (KC), Harvey Howard (HH).

*Apologies for absence* from Kath Saddler, Andrew Wilmott and Ian Reese.

*Minutes of last meeting* adopted without amendment

*Matters arising from the minutes* covered elsewhere below

*Officers' reports*

*Secretary* KP received correspondence was received as follows:

E.C. Meeting 9/10 September 2000 minutes - filed

Advice on Walking on Roads - filed

Extension of Eurowalk deadline - to AS

IT Guidance notes - to Keith

Correspondence summary - filed

Countryside update, October 2000 - to Ray Cantwell

Legislation Bulletin November 2000 - to Ray Cantwell

Footpath Campaigns - to Ray Cantwell

Countryside Bill appeal for funds - discussed. The RA suggested that Groups should donate an amount to the RA central fund which has been depleted campaigning for access in relation to the Countryside Bill. They suggested an amount based on excess funds held by a Group. The excess was calculated on the basis of a Group having a budget. AS and KC are to bring the subject up at Area level. BW indicated that we run without a budget and he sees no need for one, but added that income minus minimum running costs would be about +£70. He thought that the RA should have thought about central needs before funds were allocated to the groups, rather than allocate money and ask for it back. BW also does not like the belligerent attitude of RA campaigners and does not therefore personally like donations to them. He also noted that whereas John Ridley and George West (aided primarily by Ian, Dinah and Beryl) were instrumental in accruing the money that we have in hand, the committee is now responsible for funds.

Notwithstanding, BW indicated that a donation of £200 could be made. FF likewise is not sympathetic with the RA approach to action and suggested lowering the figure to £150 to take account of our misgivings. KC said that despite RA methods, he still supported the RA wholeheartedly and would back a £200 donation. AS agreed with KC. Val backed £150. HH abstained. KP abstained as chairman. A majority favoured a £200 donation which should be made.

KP mentioned the Group newsletter. BW indicated that he and Anne thought that it was first class and it was well received generally. KP indicated that printing and distribution would cost £50 if we were to follow the excellent folded A3 format (4xA4) that Lower Wye used. AS said that the next newsletter could mention Pentre Farm.

KP noted that the Christmas visit to Penhow was now booked, but two more were needed to make the minimum number.

*Treasurer* BW reports that accounts still stand as they did at the AGM. BW received a newsletter from the Friends of Ruperra and spoke to Pat Moseley, the secretary of the Ruperra conservation society. The castle was sold for development and the Ruperra Trust bought land in a poor state intending to make a woodland park. A lot of funding still has to be found. BW lead a walk in the area recently and sees it as ideal rambling country (I agree, FF). It is on our patch AND it is within the aims of the RA to support it financially. We agreed to make a donation of £100. KP did not agree to a higher amount since we may be asked to donate more later. (BW indicated that would like to see our funds reduced so the amount of social fundraising would increase! :-). BW suggested that we become Friends of Ruperra for an extra £5 and we would then be informed of developments.

*Footpaths Officer* RC was absent

*Rambles Officer* AS reported that there were not many walks planned for the pre-Christmas period. Walks from Stuart, John, Beryl Brian Rudge and Dennis Bickerton were not yet in the

program for various reasons. Last date for volunteering is 26 November. Alan Booth would lead a very easy walk on 18 February. FF offered lead a walk on 3 December. Barry Mitchell may be able to lead a walk. AS would contact a long walker if a short walker could not be found as a leader. KP noted that some walks are not well supported and we may be losing leaders as a result. He also noted that **Lower Wye have walks on some of our blank days and AS will consider asking if we can join them particularly 17 December and 7 January** . KP suggested a meeting in February to define the format and content of future walks programs.

*Membership Secretary* VC noted that we still had 165 members despite 3 lapsing.

*Publicity Secretary* KS was absent

*IT Officer's report* KC will put “do you know” items on the Group web site. His main report is as follows:

We have now had a website for 9 months. From a basic and faltering start I am now working on the fourth version, to include the new program of walks. I would also like to include a page about footpaths and rights of way. I set out to get the website noticed and the way to do that is to get the site registered with “Search Engines”. We are listed in Yahoo, All The Web and Dogpile, I have submitted a second request to Google. Several other sites link to us apart from the main RA site and other Gwent Area groups. Brecon Beacons National Park website has links to us and most groups in the area and the Four Wells Walking Group also has a link to us.

Up to the October update we had had about 200 “hits”, following the update we have had a further 216 hits.

In August, I joined the e-Groups Ramblers Net and Ramblers IT.

Ramblers Net is mainly for main RA activities and appears to be a communication route to Area and Group Secretaries. I have discontinued automatically receiving messages from here, although I can still download messages if I wish to.

Ramblers IT is the forum for discussing all IT matters and I continue to actively participate on behalf of the group. Major matters discussed so far include the pros and cons of a uniform or standard format for the website front page; there has now been a circular issued, No. 00/101 of "Guidance Notes For Area And Group Websites". This has only five points to note (See page 4); these are adhered to. Rights of way software has also been a topic. Almost 60 groups and 15 areas now have websites.

And finally, I have received an E-mail from Lineone, the ISP who provides our webspace saying:

**Congratulations!!**

**you have won Lineone' s website of the week.**

Our website will be highlighted in the Community section of Lineone for 7 days, starting from 13/12/00.

*Area AGM* AS confirmed that a walk is organised. KP has prewalked and will lead. AS noted that 30 were likely to attend. KP will send refreshment bill to BW who will seek recompense from Area. HH will attend because of the walk.

*SGR AGM* KP was disappointed that hardly anyone outside the committee attended. KC was also disappointed. Terry Squires attended the meeting and indicated that finding new blood was a general problem. KC indicated that we may have to be more aggressive.

*Adopt-a-path Scheme* No news since RC absent.

*Any other business* KC has found a hotel in Rhayader that provides

guided walks and other activities and intends to organise a Whit weekend outing. Details of a talk at Tredegar House about Ruperra may be had from Pat Moseley (02920 885840).

*Next Committee Meeting* Friday 19 January 2001

Walks Programme meeting Friday 16 February 2001