



# South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the meeting held on  
25 January 2007

*Members present* – Fred Fee, Keith Cooper, Adrian Sheehan, Ken Phillips, Val Clark, Jan Wagenaar, Kath Carter, Howard Harvey, Derek Humble, Diana Osman, Christine Platteeuw.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Brian Williams.
2. *Minutes of last meeting* adopted as were the *minutes of the AGM of 16 November 2006*.
3. *Matters arising from the minutes* are covered by items below
4. *Newport CC's "Going for Gold" and "Communities First" initiatives*
  - 4.1. Fred and Adrian have attended meetings with the Council and other interested bodies. The "Going for Gold" initiative aims to promote participation in exercise among those who, at the moment, take little or no exercise. It offers a recording and reward system such that participants record the nature and time of the exercise that they take and record the achievement of certain goals, such as walking for four, seven or ten miles. Currently, walking, cycling and swimming are being promoted and other activities will be included in the initiative as time passes.
  - 4.2. The initiative expects any entry in an exercise record to be validated and has asked the South Gwent Ramblers, among others, to help in the validation process. Each participant will receive a numbered card, like a credit card, on joining. The SGR has been asked to consider the following. On completion of a suitably graded walk with the SGR, a participant will give their name and number on the card to the walk's leader who will forward the number to Fred Fee who will, once a quarter, forward any names numbers he receives to the Going for Gold initiative. In this way, walks will be validated. The question for the meeting is whether we want to participate in this way.
  - 4.3. Jan asked whether participants will be fit enough. Adrian answered that we are at the top end of what is being proposed for the scheme and that, as participants proceed, they can come to us. Fred and Adrian mentioned that Newport CC's "Community First" initiative acts as a springboard for the "Going for Gold" initiative. "Communities First" has set up a number of walking groups in Newport. Each is centred on a Council estate. Fred and Adrian have attended a meeting in Ringland. A CF organiser in each estate provides a program of very basic (two- or three-mile) walks and leaders. Fred will lead one such walk. Ken said that he could lead two walks for the scheme.
  - 4.4. After some more general discussion, the meeting decided that we should participate in the "Going for Gold" initiative.
5. *Newport CC's walks leaflets*
  - 5.1. Andrew Briscoombe, Newport CC Footpaths Officer, has received funds to verify and update a series of Council-funded leaflets, each mapping out a walk in or near Newport and about five to seven miles long. He asked Fred if SGR could provide

volunteers to walk the paths and notify any problems, since Fred has kept an eye on one such walk at Bishton. The walks are generally suitable as evening or short walks. Diana, Derek, Kath, Ken, Adrian and Fred volunteered. Fred will inform Andrew and obtain sample leaflets.

6. *Stationery* Adrian asked, on behalf of RA head office, whether any member needed Ramblers stationery, such as headed paper and to give any orders to him.
7. *Calendar of events and April Newsletter* were discussed and the following was agreed:
  - 7.1. *Thursday 22 March skittles evening* Kath will book.
  - 7.2. *Thursday 17 to Sunday 20 May trip to France* involves booking the Dover to Boulogne ferry and driving to a B&B near Rouen (about two hours from Boulogne). Adrian is organising the B&B, but it is up to individuals to organise their own transport. So far ten or so have made transport bookings and will go.
  - 7.3. *Sunday 27 May coach trip to Westonbirt Arboretum* Ken will organise the coach and with a bit of luck we will see the azaleas at their best.
  - 7.4. *Sunday 10 June coach trip to Angle* Ken will provide a 6 mile walk and Diana will provide an extension for long walkers.
  - 7.5. *Sunday 12 August barbecue at Cwmcarn* Kath will provide catering except meat, Adrian will book the site, Fred will provide meat and do the cooking and Jan will provide the walk.
  - 7.6. *Sunday 16 September walks in the Cotswolds (Tewkesbury)* Ken will provide a short walk and Fred a long walk.
  - 7.7. *Thursday 4 October to Sunday 7 October weekend away in Newquay* Ken will organise a stay at the ☆☆☆ Esplanade Hotel (£32 db&b) and arrange a minibus for walks and perhaps visits to the Eden Project and the Lost Gardens of Heligan.
  - 7.8. *The Maritime area of Bristol* will feature in a walk lead by Ted Clevely and Colin Wallace as part of the normal walks programme.
  - 7.9. *A slide show* is to be organised in the Autumn and Fred will keep an eye on it.
8. *Trips walking abroad* Jan
  - 8.1. Jan has been investigating details of a putative walking trip to Interlaken. Estimated cost is about £700 (£70 flight, £100 train, £150 car for 8 days and £50 half board per day). Jan is continuing to investigate
  - 8.2. Jan is also investigating a putative trip to the Spanish Pyrenees with all levels of walks. The cost a few years ago was about £500 for ☆☆ accommodation, flights and car hire. The drive in Spain is about four hours in beautiful scenery.
  - 8.3. Details will circulate by email when Jan has more detail. Members are encouraged to pass details to those without email. Adrian will provide copy of such details for the newsletter.
9. *Officers' reports*
  - 9.1. *Secretary* Ken
    - 9.1.1. Realising that little time was left, Ken mentioned his list of correspondence received from RA and elsewhere. However, a document on public liability at walks required discussion. the meeting realised that current SGR practice was

not good enough and that we should encourage leaders to provide more discipline at walks. Fred will investigate guidance literature.

9.1.2. The list of literature received is as follows:

1.	RA - Minutes of G.C. Meeting	April 06	File
2.	RA - Minutes of Trustees Meeting	July 06	File
3.	RA - Promoting Walking Circular		Fred
4.	RA - Membership Recruitment Circular	Sept 06	Val
5.	RA - New Recruitment Leaflets	Sept 06	Val
6.	RA - Volunteer Support Update	Sept 06	File
7.	RA - Distribution of Papers	Sept 06	File
8.	RA - Footpath Worker	Sept 06	Derek
9.	RA - Footpath News	Sept 06	Derek
10.	RA - Footpath Campaigner	Sept 06	Derek
11.	RA - Access Bulletin	Oct 06	Derek
12.	RA - Countryside Update	Oct 06	Derek
13.	RA - Chairman's Bulletin	Oct 06	File
14.	RA - Thought for the Month	Oct 06	File
15.	RA - Insurance Cover	Nov 06	Discuss! File
16.	RA - Jacquetta Fewster	Nov 06	File
17.	RA - New Central Office Open Day	Nov 06	File
18.	RA - Volunteer Vacancies Wales		File
19.	RA - Footpath Campaigner	Nov 06	Derek
20.	RA - Access Bulletin	Nov 06	Derek
21.	RA - Thought for the Month	Nov 06	File
22.	RA - Access Bulletin	Dec 06	Derek
23.	RA - Footpath Campaigner	Dec 06	Derek
24.	RA - Thought for the Month	Dec 06	File
25.	RA - Footpath Campaigner	Sep 06	Derek
26.	RA - Chief Executive	Dec 06	File
27.	RA - National Events 2007	Dec 06	Chris
28.	RA - Footpath Matters	Jan 07	Derek
29.	RA - Access Bulletin	Jan 07	Derek
30.	RA - Holiday Bargains	Jan 07	?
31.	SG - Ruperra Castle	Sept 06	File
32.	SG - Area Secretary	Sept 06	File
33.	SG - RA. re Volunteer Award Scheme	Sept 06	File
34.	SG - RA Wales	Nov 06	File
35.	SG - RA re Membership	Dec 06	File
36.	RA - Public Rights of Way	Jan 07	Derek

9.2. *Treasurer* Ken pp Brian reports as follows:

After expenditure of £706.54 and income of £619.12, the balance in hand is now £836.78. In the last three months, claims for pre-walk expenses amount to £77.50. Maurice Turner, the Area Secretary, has been told by Central Office that our budget amount (£1446 – see below for breakdown) will be met in full and that the Area account will receive a cheque accordingly within the next few days. Thus, £750 earmarked for pre-walk expenses can be used as and when a claim is made.

**SGR Budget Proposal for 2006/7**

Access	45.00
Countryside	108.00
Promoting Walking	543.00
Reconnoitring Expenses	750.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>1446.00</u>

9.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek reports as follows:

Another quiet time for footpath matters. There have been a few minor diversions which have little if any affect to users, one footpath revocation which should have been carried out years ago and quite recently, plans for the road improvements along Catsash Road from it's junction with Belmont Hill, where a new junction will be constructed, to the roman road near Langstone, for the benefit of Ryder Cup spectators in 2010

I have sent my thoughts on footpath improvements to be incorporated in this work, which will render the Usk Valley Walk a lot safer if it should ever be carried out.

I have raised objections to a planned footpath diversion at Cefn Henllan near Llangibby which is an overkill regarding moving a long established footpath away from a private residence. The diversion is too big, goes through rough woodland which the property owner says he will keep clear, and seems to be designed to remove walkers from his line of vision. I have recommended an alternative which doesn't detract too much from the original line and doesn't go any closer to the property than the planned diversion.

9.4. *Rambles Officer* Christine, new to the post, had nothing to report and will liaise with Fred to produce the next programme.

9.5. *Membership Secretary* Val reports a slight decrease in membership from 198 to 187.

9.6. Publicity Secretary Fred

9.6.1. "Going for Gold" and other matters are covered on sections 4 and 5 above.

9.6.2. In addition Fred reports as follows:

I sent a copy of the walks programme to Suzanne Burrows, Newport CC's Older People's Development Officer on 23 January; she had requested one at the "Going for Gold" meeting. I have put her on my list for sending programmes.

I also received an email from Suzanne Burrows on 23 January as follows:

"I had a chap from Age Concern Cymru phone me the other day regarding Nordic Walking. He is setting up a Nordic Walking project in Newport. He wants to pay for a volunteer Nordic Walking Leader to be trained up (which costs in the region of £500). Following training he then will provide a set of 15 Nordic Walking Poles. This sounds great, however, I then started asking him more questions to find out what the catch is. When I got the information I wanted, I thought it would be a good idea to ask you about it. I was wondering whether you wanted to put it to anyone within the Ramblers group, as to whether any of them would like to volunteer to be trained up.

Training would involve:

1. Training is free, and travel expenses and any incurred hotel accommodation would be paid for - training is in Cowbridge in March I think.
2. During the training, the volunteer would be expected to be able to walk 2-3 hours solid per day over varied training, including climbing over styles, and would need wet weather gear and suitable footwear.
3. Following training, the volunteer would then be a Nordic Walk Leader and would therefore get a Nordic Walking qualification out of it. They would then be required to lead 2 Nordic Walks per week each of about 2-3 hours duration over probably around 30 weeks of the year.

I thought it best to ask to see whether some of your people would be interested, as this will obviously rule lots of people out, due to the commitment involved and just the sheer fitness involved.

Do you think you could put this to your people within Ramblers to see if anyone wants to do this?"

My response was

"There is a meeting of the SGR on Thursday this week (25 Jan) and I will suggest that I send an email to Group members and to have the Nordic Walking proposal mentioned to those without email at walks. The committee are almost always receptive to such ideas. We have about sixty active members and almost all would be capable of strolling a few miles with poles and clambering over a stile or six. (Last weekend twelve of us enjoyed a strenuous ten-miler in the Brecon Beacons with over 2000ft of elevation). However, I am pessimistic that volunteers would be forthcoming because of the commitments involved, but you never know!"

9.6.3. The meeting discussed the Nordic Walking request for volunteers and decided that it was too onerous for SGR to be involved.

9.7. *IT Officer's report* Keith reports as follows:

#### **Website**

The website software has been updated to the latest most secure versions of the software used. I have also been able to improve the function of the 'Contact Us' function. People requesting information about Rambles will now have the e-mail sent to rambles@south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk which is then forwarded to Christine and likewise Footpaths to footpaths@south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk which is then forwarded to Derek.

#### **Website Hosting**

Due to problems with web host 1and1.co.uk (fortunately not affecting south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk), I have moved the site to another host, Knighthost.co.uk who have a server at 123-REG, a part of Pipex. This does not affect anyone trying to find our website.

#### **Domain Registration (south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk)**

With the change of server I have changed domain registrar, from 1and1 to 123-REG, and as domains can be renewed up to 90 days before they are due I took the opportunity to do so and renewed it upto April 2009.

#### **E-Mail**

I can set up e-mail addresses for any committee member to use for Ramblers business, if wanted please contact me.

#### **Walk Grades**

With the adoption of the RA Walkfinder grade references as the only walk grade reference used, the website will need updating to reflect this. Fred has said he will assist me with this.

#### **Content**

The site now contains information beyond SGR information, such as Area minutes.

10. *Next meeting* – 26 April 2007