



South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the committee meeting held on 11 October 2007

Members present – Val Clark, Diana Osman, Kath Carter, Brian Williams, Ken Phillips, Fred Fee, Jan Waagener, Christine Plateeuw.

1. *Apologies for absence* Keith
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted
 - 2.1. *Matters arising from the minutes*
 - 2.1.1. Map and Compass event has been organised for Wednesday 16 January and Sunday 20 January.
 - 2.1.2. Some members found the barbecue walk too steep and this will be taken into account for future barbecue walks.
 - 2.1.3. The Tewkesbury trip featured a long walk in the afternoon. Some members would prefer a long walk in the morning. Ken explained that the logistics of the trip militated against a longer morning walk.
 - 2.1.4. It was not possible to book the skittles evening for 8 November. Kath booked for 29 November instead.
3. *South Gwent Ramblers AGM* is to be a no-frills event at the Civic Centre.
4. *Newsletter* Brian asked for the newsletter to include an item inviting members to become walks' leaders and to mention the availability of expenses for pre-walking. Ken agreed. Christine said that there was a particular shortage of short walkers. Jan and Fred said that they would help new leaders in pre-walking if any came forward.
5. *Officers' reports*
 - 5.1. *Secretary* Ken presented the correspondence:

1. R.A. Thought for the month	Jul 07	File
2. S.G.R. Letter to Beverley Penny re Coastal Access	Jul 07	Discuss/File
3. S.G.R. Letter to Janet Davis re Draft Footpath policy	Jul 07	File
4. S.G.R. Letter to White Hart Village Inn	Jul 07	File
5. S.G.R. Letter to Newport Golf Club	Aug 07	File
6. S.G.R * Letters to SGR Walks Leaders	Aug 07	File
7. R.A. Footpath Matters	Aug 07	Derek
8. R.A. Foot & Mouth Disease	Aug 07	File
9. R.A. New Chief Executive	Aug 07	File
10. R.A. Thought for the month	Aug 07	File
11. S.G.R. Letter to Adrian Sheehan	Sep 07	File
12. R.A. New Recruitment Leaflets	Sep 07	File
13. R.A. Thought for the month	Sep 07	File
14. R.A. Members Database	Sep 07	File
15. R.A. Trustees Meeting Notes	Sep 07	File
16. R.A. Secretary's Group Newsletter	Oct 07	Discuss /File
17. R.H. Holiday Offers	Oct 07	File

 - 5.1.1. Beverley Penny wants the RA to form a group of interested Officers to represent the RA on coastal Access. Derek has volunteered to represent the SGR and will attend a meeting on 22 October at the Civic Centre. Beverley Penny

will speak on behalf of the RA. The meeting will be chaired by Helen Howlett who is employed by Newport CC and Cardiff CC.

5.2. *Treasurer* Brian reported:

5.2.1. Payment to run the Group comes from Area. For the first time, last year, we had to submit a budget. We requested a larger than normal amount to cover the possibility of a heavy run on pre-walk expenses: this did not happen. This year such expenses were £372 compared to £172 last year. Also for the first time, the running costs had to be bundled together under the Charitable Objectives of the RA: a breakdown by Income and Expenditure will be kept separately.

5.2.2. We now have to present to the RA a budget estimating the amount that we seek to run the Group for the ensuing year. It is quite simple and has received official blessing. Ideally, year-on-year, we are seeking a £1000 working balance.

5.2.3. The approximate projected budget figures for the next year are as follows:

Balance at 30 September 2007	£1500
Anticipated expenditure 2007/8:	
Footpaths (100% increase on last year)	£10
Countryside	£0
Access	£25
Promoting walking (30% increase)	<u>£1231</u>
	£1276
Projected balance at 30 September 2009	£224
To meet the above anticipated costs and to retain a working balance of £1000, we request that the budget allowance for the forthcoming year be set at	£776

5.2.4. Brian said that if there is any deficit over the year, the RA would be sympathetic in cushioning any losses.

5.2.5. Kath asked if excesses would be clawed back and Brian reassured her that area were not thinking on those lines: they will allow a few years for the budgeting system to settle down.

5.2.6. Derek indicated that Coastal Access had its own budget and therefore any work done by Group members on Coastal Access would not impinge on the SGR budget.

5.2.7. The budget was accepted.

5.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek reported:

5.3.1. There is nothing of great interest to report since July.

5.3.2. I have informed Monmouthshire County Council of a blatant footpath blockage by a farmer near Ponthir. The entrance to Llan-Sor Wood on Public Footpath 34, in the community of Llanhennock, north of Ponthir reservoir, has been blocked by several tonnes of bagged silage making access all but impossible even to the most determined walkers. Monmouth CC are looking into the matter.

5.3.3. I was advised of this by a member of the public via our website message forwarding facility.

5.3.4. A footpath blockage at Ruperra Castle, reported earlier in the year by the same method, was cleared by Torfaen Council, following my notification and the reportee has expressed their delight by e-mail.

5.3.5. There have been a few minor diversions which will have little if any effect to users.

5.3.6. Another Environmental Statement has been received concerning possible building land at Cot Hill, Llanwern, from Gallagher Estates.

5.4. *Rambles Officer* Christine reported

5.4.1. The current walks programme was varied, well filled and well attended.

5.4.2. For the next programme, walks will be requested on 22 October with a deadline of 10 November so that the programme can be published earlier than the last one.

5.4.3. Walking on 30 December could be promoted for the *Festival of Winter Walks*, and could be a combined walk. Ken suggested that we try to get an article in the Argus and that we supply mince pies and a drink, although the drink will not be mentioned in any article.

5.5. *Membership Secretary* Val indicated that membership was down to 192, down 3.

5.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred reported:

5.6.1. The Summer/Autumn programme was edited, printed and distributed to members and to Newport, Abergavenny and Caerphilly Tourist Information Offices. each TIO received a poster of all the walks.

5.6.2. A bundle of RA membership forms received from the RA will be interleaved with the next programme for distribution to TIOs.

5.6.3. SGR gets a mentions in the Newport Activity Guide for the over 60s.

5.6.4. Details of our walks were sent to the Monmouthshire Green Directory.

5.6.5. I received the following email

I am emailing as I feel that the following could be of interest to you.

I have just been appointed as the Community Outreach Officer for the RSPB and my role is to create links between community groups and organisations that would be interested in using the Newport Wetlands as a resource.

You maybe aware that at present a new building is underway to provide an information and resource centre for all to use. The centre will also offer conference rooms and teaching rooms that could be used to your advantage. The wetlands also offers training for volunteers to work on the site which could be an interest to those who have an interest in environmental work and wishing to gain an insight to conservation whilst promoting therapeutic, emotional and social well being. The site also provides an area of beauty with a walk way that leads right around the site which therefore could possibly be incorporated into one of your walks.

The Wetland Reserve is an up and coming site with much gained interest throughout Newport that offers a wide range of learning for all ages, I feel that the RSPB can help to provide support to all who wish to consider becoming involved or just by using the resource within the reserve with a possibility of working together to deliver projects and programmes that will benefit people.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me on 07737678970 or to email me with a hope that we could meet and discuss future possibilities with your organisation using the resource for any future ideas that you may have.

Looking forward to your reply,

Kind Regards

Marie Preston

RSPB Community Outreach Officer (Newport)

The committee agreed that Fred should reply positively.

5.7. *IT Officer's report* Keith was absent

6. *Proposed Activities for 2007/2008*

- 6.1. KGP produced a list detailed below of activities which might be of interest.
- 6.2. He asked the committee to consider them and also form any ideas of their own. We will discuss them at our meeting in January 2008.
- 6.3. Skittles - Nov 07 & Apr 08
- 6.4. Two coach trips - one to Gower and AN.Other BBQ ~ Cosmeston or elsewhere
- 6.5. Bristol Maritime Area· Wallace & Grommet
- 6.6. Westonbirt Aboretum in Oct, Aberglasny & Wales Botanical Gardens.
- 6.7. Severn Bore & Gloucester Docks, Cardiff Bay, DufTryn House Weekend Away - Newquay again.

7. *Any Other Business*

- 7.1. Adrian advised that Area had received a revised Group Constitution from R.A Head Office. The amendments were mainly to encompass the change in name of the R.A There were a few other cosmetic changes and Adrian was asked to produce a new constitution in Area and submit it for our approval.
- 7.2. Brian Turner asked if we had any SGR sweaters for sale. KGP said we have two available and will bring one along to our next walk. Brian Williams reminded us that 2008 was SGR's 25th Anniversary and should we consider producing a new issue. Val Clark suggested PINK but we hope she was not being serious!!. KGP will contact Dinah (she organised the last issue) to see what can be arranged.
- 7.3. Brian Williams noted that Islwyn & LowerWye Group had new publications for sale. KGP will investigate & report back.
- 7.4. We will attempt to attract more members to next years AGM by holding it at a Pub or Club. Diana Osman offered to try and find such a venue.

8. *Next Committee Meeting* is on Thursday 24 January 2008