



# South Gwent Ramblers



## Minutes of the committee meeting held on 27 January 2009

*Members present* - Fred Fee, Ken Phillips, Val Clark, Derek Humble, Brian Turner, Diana Osman, Dave Fereday.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Adrian Sheehan, Jan Waagener and Christine Platteeuw
2. Before the meeting we were happy to hear a talk from Louise McGuinness who is organising the Monmouthshire Walking Weekend. Fred has corresponded with her about a walk from Usk that should form one of the activities on the Weekend. She gave us a thorough and entertaining account of the intention of the Weekend and how we would fit in. She fielded questions. The meeting decided to go ahead with our participation.
3. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted
4. *Matters arising from the minutes*
  - 4.1. RE item 4.2.5. The working balance is £1000.
  - 4.2. RE item 4.4.3. Christiene Platteeuw, at the AGM, showed that the number of strenuous walks was in proportion to the numbers of walks of other grades.
  - 4.3. Ken thanked Derek for the Christmas walks
5. *Minutes of AGM* were adopted
6. *Matters arising from the minutes*
  - 6.1. A revised constitution is needed since the old one is too long in the tooth.
  - 6.2. Fred will ask Keith to update the on-line version of the walks programme and to update the forthcoming events pages.
  - 6.3. Peter Elliott has noted that the attendances for slide shows has diminished recently and proposed that a slide show be organised in the hotel on the weekend away to Newquay. The meeting agreed that a slide show should be organised.
7. *Events definitely agreed for 2009*
  - 7.1. Thursday 26 March - **Skittles evening** at Whiteheads organised again by Kath Carter, Jan and Jen.
  - 7.2. Saturday 25/Sunday 26 April - **Pembroke Ramblers visit**. Fred will provide a strenuous walk near Llanthony on the Saturday: Jean and Arthur Butt will provide a moderate walk on the Sunday.
  - 7.3. Sunday 26 April - **Monmouthshire Weekend of Walks**. Fred will provide a strenuous 12-mile walk from Usk as part of our programme to feature in the Weekend.

- 7.4. Sunday 7 June - **Coach trip to Minehead**. Ian Rees will provide a walk that features a rail journey. Short walk yet to be finalised.
- 7.5. Saturday 13 June - **Trip to the Cairngorms**. Dave will arrange walks up Monroes and Corbetts during a seven-day stay based in Aviemore.
- 7.6. Sunday 12 July - **Coach trip to Pembroke**. Dave will provide a long walk and either Diana or Christine Bryan will provide the short walk. Either way Dave will consult Christine.
- 7.7. Sunday 8 August - **Barbecue**. Diana suggested Tintern Station as the venue, having contacted them and being convinced of its suitability. She will book.
- 7.8. Saturday 5 September - **Severn Bore**. Dave notice that National Open Day was promised entry into houses, gardens and like venues that were normally shut on this day and that Bore was forecast to be good. Also, Paul Mellor is pre-walking a walk in the area near where the Bore can be viewed. Dave will look into a possible SGR event.
- 7.9. 8 October - **Newquay weekend away**. Ken reported that the weekend is already fully booked with 37 members and that there were was a waiting list. The number could not be increased because of lack of extra accommodation at the hotel.
- 7.10. Thursday 12 November. **Skittles evening** as above.
- 7.11. Sunday 15 November - **SGR AGM**. After last year's success, we decided that Llanishen Village Hall should remain as the venue. Diana will book.
- 7.12. Thursday 17 December - **SGR Christmas Dinner** to be held in Newport Golf Club as usual.
- 7.13. Tuesday 29 December - **Christmas Walk**. TBA.

## 8. *Future events*

A proposal by Christine Bryan and Colin Wallace for a **coach trip to the South Coast of England** was postponed and it is hoped that it will feature in the 2010 events

## 9. *Officers' reports*

9.1. *Secretary* Ken presented the correspondence that he had received:

1	RA	Insurance Guide	Oct 08	Discuss/File
2	RA	Footpath matters	Oct 08	Derek
3	RA	Volunteer Day	Nov 08	Discuss/File
4	Steve	Trip to Nepal		File
5	RA	Rail Rambles Group Contact	Oct 08	Discuss/File
6	Mark Jones	Monmouth Waiking Weekend	Dec 08	Discuss/File
7	RVA	Union Comments & request for action		Discuss/File
8	GG	AGM & Newsletter	Nov 08	Discuss/File
9	cCBC	Ruperra Planning Application letter	Aug 08	Discuss/File
10	RA	Strategy Policy 2008/13		Discuss/File
11	RA	Footpath matters	Nov 08	Derek
12	Judy Cox	Pentre Farm	Nov 08	File
13	RA	Data protection re group officers	Nov 08	Discuss/File
14	MTO	Sunshine Radio	Dec 08	Discuss/File
15	Fred Fee	Sunshine Radio	Dec 08	Discuss/File

16	RA	Notification of Welsh Council	Dec 08	Discuss/File
17	RA	New date for Volunteer Day	Nov 08	Discuss/File
18	RA	Code of Conduct	Dec 08	Discuss/File
19	RA	Group News	Dec 08	Discuss/File
20	RA	Access Bulletin	Jan 09	Derek
21	RA	Thank you from RA		File
22	RA	Ramblers Hoiddays		File

Ken also said that he had received an insurance guide and that we should discuss it at the next meeting. The committee agreed.

9.2. *Treasurer* Brian W was not present

9.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek reported:

There have been several Footpath Diversion Applications since the last report, but none that merited an objection.

One footpath within the Celtic Manor Golf Club has been diverted, and another will probably be altered in the near future. Both of these will improve the routes involved.

An application for planning permission for river training and associated bridge works has been received for the 'listed', old iron bridge near Draethen. The bridge has been damaged by trees falling into the river following bank erosion and becoming lodged in the supports. Subsequent flood water has put pressure on the trees, resulting in support failure. Many organisations have contributed to a fund for repairs to both the bridge and riverbank which may run to more than £100,000.

A combined extinguishment and diversion application has been made for paths in the Old St. Mellons area which will benefit walkers.

A combined extinguishment and diversion application has been made for several paths at Clearwell Farm at Michaelstone, where farm buildings have been converted into holiday accommodation. This will be of benefit to walkers who will be able to enjoy better views.

Efforts are continuing to establish new and improved rights of way, especially in the Caldicot and Wentloog Levels areas in conjunction with Coastal Access objectives.

A path near the wetlands is padlocked at each end by the RSPB. The path is not on the definitive map but efforts are being made to have the path opened.

9.4. *Rambles Officer* Christine was not present

9.5. *Membership Secretary* Val was still having problems with inaccurate details from the RA.

9.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred reported:

I attended the inaugural walk along the Rhyminy River Circular Walk at behest of Newport CC in co-operation with Caerphilly CC. Talked to Andrew Briscoombe about CCs walks projects. They have money to bring paths up to standard and are going forward with more walks with associated pamphlets. He asked if we could "look after" any pamphlet walks and report deficiencies to him. I said I would put it to the committee, but was optimistic that we would support him.

Several of the committee and some members have inspected the walks in older NCC pamphlets and reported on the condition of the walks to Andrew. I suggested that Andrew come to the next committee meeting, letting us know what progress is being made and what support was forthcoming. He indicated that the older walks have been used as a basis for new walks not necessarily covering exactly the same ground.

The winter programme of walks was typeset, printed, stuffed and distributed. Thanks go to Christine for being so prompt in getting the walks together and providing a spreadsheet in a format that sailed through the production process.

I attended a meeting at the Civic Centre entitled "Workshop for users" to help the Newport City Council Countryside Services Team (Andrew Briscoombe represented them) find out how

residents of Newport would prefer to receive and access information about the Council's Countryside Service. Also attending were members of other walking organisations and a member of the Farmers Union. We gave our views of countryside access and the benefits and problems associated with it, including verbal rambling from one particularly keen participant. For the most part, the meeting concerned the cross-fertilisation of information currently displayed individual locations by respective organisations, such as the wetlands centre and how the various organisations could pool their documentation at each site. One attendee noted that the Wetlands were a joint enterprise, but that the RSPB had virtually taken over the running of the centre building and were only allowing space for RSPB literature. I pointed to the relative merits of SGR publicity, with new members coming equally from programmes left at Tourist Information Offices and from our web site. I noted that the current Newport CC site was aimed at benefit-seekers and others such as council house tenants and that it was virtually impossible to find any countryside information on the site. Others pointed to the difficulty of knowing who to contact and which department to ask for when using the telephone to get information. The Farmers Union representative thought that the Council should make more effort to publicise and explain the Countryside Code so that new countryside users would not accidentally become a nuisance, as happens frequently. The meeting was chaired by a consultant from "Resources for Change" who pronounced that she was delighted with the information that she had received

Liaised with Mark Jones, the Tourism Marketing Manager of Monmouthshire CC after volunteering a walk for the Sunday of their Monmouthshire Walking Weekend on Friday-Sunday 24-26 April. Ted Clevely has agreed to deputise for me if I can't make it.

*9.7. IT Officer's report* Keith was not present.

*Next Committee Meeting* is on 19 March 2009