

*Members present* - Fred Fee, Ken Phillips, Brian Williams, Christine Platteeuw, Adrian Sheehan, Brian Turner, Dave Fereday.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Jan Wagenaar, Derek Humble and Val Clark.
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted
3. *The Air Ambulance* was called after one of our members broke an ankle when on an icy ridge on 1 February. The meeting agreed to donate £50 to the Air Ambulance.
4. *Airtime* Anna could not get airtime on local radio despite trying via contacts that she knew.
5. *Walks*
  - 5.1. The committee welcomed Dave Fereday to his new post as Rambles Officer who takes over from Christine Platteeuw. Fred is to send him a new blank modified walks spreadsheet and a list of members' email addresses.
  - 5.2. Ken voiced the worries of several members in saying that there are nowadays few if any intermediate walks of 7 or 8 miles: he made a call for long walkers to help the short walkers in this respect, especially since there is a dearth of short walk leaders despite the good support for the walks. The meeting agreed with Ken and he will to put an article in the forthcoming Newsletter.
6. *IT Officer* Keith Cooper has not been well for some time to the extent that we were worried about his ability to continue. Fred was happy to report that he was feeling better than for some time and is now actively seeking to keep the South Gwent Ramblers web site up to date.
7. *2010 Calendar*
  - 7.1. The *Okehampton* trip has been finalised.
  - 7.2. The *Skittles Match* is on, with Wednesday 24 March being the proposed date.
  - 7.3. On Sunday 25 April Brian Turner and Ken will provide walks for a trip to *Clearwell Caves*, followed by a visit to the caves.
  - 7.4. Although the proposed coach trip to *Windsor Great Park* on Saturday 5 June appears to clash with Dave's week to the *Lake District* beginning on the same day, in practice the two events will be supported by different sections of the membership. The committee decided that no action was needed.
  - 7.5. The Ramblers Association have proposed that Welsh members host and publicise "*Baton Passing*" events in March as part of the celebrations *for the Ramblers Association 75th anniversary*. Ken suggested to Adrian that Greater Gwent Area should take the lead in organising an event at Area level. Adrian will take this to Greater Gwent Area.
  - 7.6. The *Lynmouth/Linton* coach trip is on for Sunday 18 July.
  - 7.7. *Croquet match* Dave has been unable to find a croquet pitch. He suggested that we could try a Boules (Pétanque) match instead since Boules is a popular in Gwent. He suggested an evening at the Wheatsheaf and the committee agreed.
  - 7.8. The Barbecue will take place in Tintern again in August with 8, 15 and 22 August pencilled in as possible dates. Ken, Kath and Diana Osman will organise the event.
  - 7.9. The *Kidderminster* coach trip will be organised for Sunday 12 September with Ian and another providing the walks. The trip will feature a ride on the *Severn Valley Railway* which runs between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth.

- 7.10. The format of the trip to *Newquay* on 30 September (walks by Ken and Dave) provided lively discussion with Brian Turner, Dave, Adrian and Ken providing input. Flexibility was limited by need to book busses ahead of the trip to ensure availability. Several variations of optional and fixed-date walks, fixed and optional visits and driving or bussing were discussed. The meeting appeared to favour two fixed days and one optional. Further thought will be given to the exact format of the trip.
- 7.11. A coach trip to *Westonbirt Arboretum* will be organised for Sunday 24 October, after Brian William's oratorical plea, being in thrall of the beauty of the Arboretum in its Autumnal clothes on his last visit.
- 7.12. The *South Gwent Ramblers AGM* and walk will be organised in Llanishen again, for 21 November.
- 7.13. It is South Gwent Ramblers' turn to host the *Greater Gwent Area AGM* this year with 7 November being proposed for the date. Dave suggested Redwick Village Hall. Ken will recce the Redwick venue.
- 7.14. A Winter *Skittles Match* was proposed for 10 or 17 November. Ken will speak to Jan about catering.
- 7.15. The date of *Christmas Dinner* is proposed as Thursday 16 December.
- 7.16. The date of the *Christmas Walk* is proposed as 29 December if Derek Agreed.
- 7.17. Ken noted that he would welcome any further ideas at any time.

## 8. *Officers' reports*

8.1. *Secretary* Ken Phillips presented the list of correspondence, now mostly electronic.

1.	RA	Notification of Meeting with RA CEO & Chair	DiscussFile
2.	RA	Welsh Council 2010 Conference	DiscussFile
3.	RA	Report from Jonathan King - Bon Treasurer	Brian
4.	RA	Update on Ramblers 75th Anniversary	DiscussFile
5.	RA	Themed Walks	Dave
6.	RA	Walking Forwards	File
7.	RA	Volunteer Newsletter	File
8.	Caerphilly CBe	Update on Ruperra Castle	File
9.	WCLA	Funding Survey	File
10.	HF Holidays	Group Holidays	Dave
11.	Blacks Leisure Group	Sponsorship etc.	Fred
12.	South Gwent Ramblers	Letter to Adrian Sheehan	File
13.	eMail	Angela Ben-Gur	Dave

8.1.1. A Ramblers Association event at Cardiff City Hall on 23 June will celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ramblers Association. More details will follow.

8.1.2. The planning application, on appeal to the Welsh assembly, for houses on the site of Ruperra Castle has not been granted.

8.2. *Treasurer* Brian Williams reports:

The the Area Treasurer has allocated, based on our second draft budget (£1,112) submitted in August 2009, an initial first payment of £556 being 50% of the total requested and now banked into our account. The balance of the payment for later in the year cannot be confirmed at this stage.

If we receive the total requested a projection for this year will, at 30th. Sept 2010, show a closing balance of approx. £800. Our working balance of £1,000 will be breached and unlikely to reach this figure again.

The figure for the year end is assuming expenditure will be similar to last year, i.e. no cost savings being considered at this stage.

The current account stands at £1,374.

8.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble

8.3.1. There has been a number of Footpath Applications for diversions, extinguishments and planning applications which may affect public footpaths in our area since our last meeting in September. None of the applications if allowed will be contentious.

8.3.2. One planning permission renewal has been received for a new golf club at Michaelstone, and a revised plan for diverting a path at Pare Golf Club to cater for a new hotel block.

- 8.3.3. There are a few minor diversions planned for the area including, at last, Celtic Manor's 2010 course 18th fairway path.
  - 8.3.4. There is one path creation application to formalise the previously missed route from Catsash Road to Caer Licyn Lane which is part of the Usk Valley Way.
  - 8.3.5. The first Gating Order has been applied for to prevent unruly and disorderly conduct taking place behind Maindee Baths on a cul de sac path.
  - 8.3.6. The Bridleway from Lodge Hill Farm, Caerleon to Park Farm is to be downgraded to a footpath as the route is unsafe for equestrians due to its steep gradient and neglected state through the woodland. Surface reinstatement would be prohibitively expensive.
  - 8.3.7. The proposed housing development by Newbridge Estates at Rhiwderin, which has been refused by Newport City Council, is going to an appeal.
  - 8.3.8. 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.
- 8.4. *Rambles Officer* Dave Fereday, being new to his post, had nothing to report. Christine offered as much help as was needed to help set him on his way.
- 8.5. *Membership Secretary* Ken Phillips pp Val Clark
- 8.5.1. Our membership at 7 December stands at 184. The new-style report from area shows that we had 4 new members in November and no resignations, but our membership has reduced by 4 since my last report. We have finally had an explanation on how they arrive at these totals !!. It is all to do with "Active" status, In the past members were considered active even though their membership renewal had lapsed for as much as 3 months. A new membership status has been introduced called "Payment Pending". They will remain in this category for 3 months during which they will still receive standard membership benefits such as Walk Magazine, be included on the membership labels, but will not be included in our membership count. Once a renewal has been received and processed the individual reverts back to active membership and is included in our total membership count. If a renewal is not forthcoming then the individual is transferred to "lapsed membership". This means that their last paid subscription ended more than 3 months but less than 15 months previously. The individual is deemed to have left the group and their record is stamped with a leave date.
  - 8.5.2. What it all means is that only members who have paid and been processed will be included in our monthly total. Let us hope that their processing times improve.
- 8.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee
- 8.6.1. In response to an email from Andy Briscoombe (Newport City Council), I sent him the following text about South Gwent Ramblers for inclusion in Newport Matters:  
South Gwent Ramblers are affiliated to the Ramblers Association and are a lively group who enjoy each others company while walking in the wonderful Gwent countryside, in the mountains and further afield. Walks vary from strenuous 12-milers to easy 4-milers. We provide guided walks on most Sundays leaving from the Newport Civic Centre Lower Car Park, Faulkner Road at 9:30am unless noted as different in our walks programme. Details of walks can be found in the Argus "What's On" section. Our web site is <http://south-gwent-ramblers.co.uk>, although technical difficulties mean that walks details there not up-to-date. For further information ring Fred on 0163 266647 or Ken on 01633 894172.
  - 8.6.2. A while ago Andy Briscoombe said that a Festival of Walks in April round Easter time was being considered and I have heard nothing since. I intend to get publicity for South Gwent Ramblers by sending the upcoming walks programme if the Festival is still on, and may supply a walk.
  - 8.6.3. In November, I typeset and helped to distribute the walks programme for December to March.
  - 8.6.4. In February, I typeset and distributed the March Newsletter. As always, thanks to Ken for writing the text and spotting my deliberate mistakes.
- 8.7. *IT Officer's report* Keith Cooper was not present. As noted above, Keith is now in better health and is actively updating the South Gwent Ramblers web site.

9. *AOB* Christine suggested that we ask members if they would be willing to receive walks programmes and newsletters from the South Gwent Ramblers in electronic format. There was general agreement that we should try, but that there were loose ends to tidy up first.
10. *Next committee meeting* on 11 March 2010.