



*Members present* - Fred Fee, Ken Phillips, Brian Williams, Christine Platteeuw, Val Clark, Kath Carter, Jan Wagenaar, Brian Turner, Dave Fereday.

1. *Apologies for absence* No apologies this time except for Ken apologising for the early finish of the last meeting because of the unexpected early closing time of the Civic Centre on a Friday.
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted
3. *Matters arising from the minutes* Re *item 3*, the cheque has been sent to the Air Ambulance.
4. *Ramblers Association 75th Anniversary* Ken reported that any celebrations will have to be at Group level, except for an evening event in Cardiff organised by Welsh council for all Ramblers Association members, with tickets to be paid by those attending.
5. *2010 calendar*
  - 5.1. The *Okehampton* trip was enjoyed by all, despite the bitterly cold weather, with the possible exception of Val who was unwell throughout. Ken wrote to the hotel's walks leader to thank him for his help and to say that we may well see him again next year.
  - 5.2. The *skittles evening* is all arranged. Val can defend her title.
  - 5.3. Ken has made a booking for *Clearwell Caves* provisional on a large enough number booking.
  - 5.4. Dave has some takers for the *Lakes trip* and it is going ahead.
  - 5.5. The coach and meals have been booked for the *Windsor trip* (Saturday 5 June). Dinah is working hard on the walk format. We have a new coach company this year. Brian and Ken have been to see the buses and the company's charismatic owner: they are happy with their comfort and air conditioning which works.
  - 5.6. Ken has booked the coach for the *Lynmouth trip* (Sunday 18 July) and Paul Mellor has booked the meal. Details of the walks are to be announced later.
  - 5.7. A *Boules evening* (1 August) is still to be booked. Dave is on the case and may even get to know the rules of Boules before the event! Ken has a set of Boules if we need them.
  - 5.8. Diana gave Ken a number for booking the *Tintern Barbecue* (Sunday 8 August), but he has not yet had an answer. He will visit the site after Easter if he then still cannot get through. Last year's chefs are willing to continue this year, Fred will sort out the meat provisions and Kath will sort out the rest of the food and the logistics. A walks leader is needed as Diana will be recovering from the birth of her second child.
  - 5.9. Ken has booked the coach for the *Kidderminster trip* (Sunday 12 September) and Ian Reese is in the process of organising the walks. The Railway company have sent timetables and fares: they are not as accommodating as the Somerset Railway, although they did provide leaflets of possible short walks. More work is yet to be done on meals and walks.
  - 5.10. The hotel for the *Newquay trip* (Thursday 30 September through the weekend) has been booked. Ken and Dave are going to sort out the itinerary.
  - 5.11. Ken has booked the coach for *Westonbirt Arboretum* (Sunday 24 October) and contacted them about a the provision of a booking form and a guide. They have not replied yet. Ken and Brian will provide an itinerary.
  - 5.12. The *Area AGM* will be held on Sunday 7 November and hosted by us. Christine said that Redbrook Hall was not available. Ken said that he would investigate Ponthir Village Hall as an

alternative and would report back. Ian Reese will lead a walk, as may Dave. We need to organise catering and Ken suggested volunteers other than Kath and Val should come forward, to give them a breather for a change. Ken reported that, at first, Area were unwilling to provide funds for refreshments, but relented and offered £3 per person.

5.13. The *South Gwent Ramblers AGM* will be held again in Lanishen Village Hall on Sunday 21 November. Diana will book it and lead the walk. Val and Ken will provide the helping hands and Kath will supply the food.

5.14. Nothing has yet been done re the *skittles evening* in November.

## 6. *Officers' reports*

### 6.1. *Secretary* Ken Phillips

6.1.1. Ken presented the list of correspondence:

RA	S.W. Argus Publicity	Discuss/ File
RA	Get Walking Day	Dave
RA	Welsh Council motions	File
RA	Volunteer Survey Results	File
RA	Volunteer Newsletter	File
RA	Ebbw Vale Eisteddfod	Discuss/ File
RA	75th Anniversary Update	File
GG	Minutes of meeting on 27/1/10	Discuss/ File
SGR	Letter to Air Ambulance	File
SGR	Letter to Ramblers Holidays	File

### 6.2. *Treasurer* Brian Williams reported as follows:

We understand from the Area Treasurer our budget figure for this year of £1,112 has been reduced by the Ramblers Assoc. to £718. We have received a 50% payment for the 1st. half of the year i.e. £556. Therefore, the 2nd. half will be £718 - £556 = £162.

At the previous committee meeting I indicated the budget figure submitted had been reduced at the Ramblers Assoc. request, which will result in an anticipated loss for the year of some £200. With this latest reduction on the second part of the annual grant our year end result will show a further loss of £400. i.e approx. £600 in total.

That's the bad news. Now, hopefully, the good news. Our Area Treasurer requests we continue to spend as per the budget figure and any shortfalls will be assessed at the financial year end. Payments, if needed and agreed, will then be made from Area reserves.

At this rate, should we not qualify for a 'hand out', we will have exhausted our reserves during the year 2010/2011 and will again have to appeal for funding from the Area coffers. Otherwise we will have to make drastic cuts in our day to day running costs.

6.2.1. The Air Ambulance has responded to our £50 donation by thanking us and sending notes about what it does.

6.2.2. £40 has been received for our Newsletter advert from fro Ramblers Holidays.

6.2.3. We currently have £1291.55 in our account. The sum takes into account three cheques awaiting presentation.

6.2.4. As a footnote to the report above, we may have no reserves some time next year although Area say that they will give us enough funds. However, there is no certainty. Even though Area have put their house in order, there may be more cuts percolating down from the Ramblers Association. Ken noted that Area had asked us to cut our budget by 25%. After the budgets were accepted, the Ramblers Association said that 34% would be cut. As an aside, the Ramblers Association appear to be reverting to paying Area according to membership numbers.

7. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble sent in the following report:

There have been a number of Footpath Applications for diversions and planning applications which may affect public footpaths in our area since our last meeting in January.

I have objected to one of the diversion applications at Lysaght's as it would move a pleasant route which is in touch with nature onto a housing estate.

A number of Orders have been made in reference to diversions from the past year or so, but these are all part of the due legal process involved in improving routes for walkers benefits.

A new combined cycleway and footpath is planned to link Malpas and Bettws estates on the route of the existing footpath for the benefit of school children amongst others. Being some 3 metres wide and lit at night, it is probably going to be an improvement as you will now be able to see the cyclists before they run you down. Three new bridges will have to be built.

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. *Rambles Officer* Dave Fereday reported that there was a number of short walks to be filled for the upcoming walks programme. Most of the walks were quickly volunteered from within the committee. Dave also pointed to the Islwyn Ramblers web site - it has won an award.

9. *Membership Secretary Val Clark* reported that our membership at 31 January 2010 was 177. It was sad to note that long standing members Ros & Roger Butcher and Mr & Mrs Roger Trace are no longer Active members of our group. There are a few other members who are bordering on this category and Ken will write letters to those individuals.

10. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee reported as follows

The Newsletter was set out and distributed.

I sent an e-mail to Andy Briscoombe enquiring as to whether he could mention our walks or at least our web site in the literature for the upcoming Festival of Walks at Newport Council. He said that he would see if it was possible.

Monmouth Walking Festival is due to run in October. I have offered to walk and noted the address of our website. Unfortunately I would have to train with him as leader, but nothing is set in stone according to the organiser.

I have a new version of Microsoft Office and developed a new AppleScript to fully automate production of walks programs and e-mails to the Argus.

Labels have been ordered for the forthcoming walks programs distribution.

11. *IT Officer's report* Keith Cooper was not present

12. *AOB*

Jan suggested that some walks may be better attended on Saturdays. He was thinking of those that clashed with days such as Mother's Day. We decided to think on it,

13. *Next committee meeting* on Thursday 17 June