



# South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the Committee meeting held on  
2 February 2012 at Newport Civic Centre

*Members present* - Fred Fee, Ken Phillips, Brian Williams, Derek Humble, Adrian Sheehan, Val Clark, Brian Turner, Dave Fereday, Dawn Bishop and Tony Phelps.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Adrian Sheehan and Tony Phelps
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted
3. *Minutes of AGM* were amended as follows:
  - 3.1. Re para 3 "Meeting" to read "AGM"
  - 3.2. Re para 5.3 "what Ken affectionately calls the elderly and the infirm" to read "those now unable to cope with the intermediate walks" in the interests of accuracy.
4. *Matters arising from the minutes* are covered below
5. *Matters arising from the AGM* are covered below
6. *Officers' reports*
  - 6.1. *Secretary* Ken Phillips presented the correspondence:

R.C.	E.mail from Mike Erskine re Coastal Walk	File
K.P.	Letter & Invoice to Ramblers Holidays	File
R. C..	Ramblers Cvmru & Devolution	Discuss/ File
R.C ..	E.mail re Welsh Council 2012	Discuss/ File
F.F.	E.mail re Ramblers Holidays offers	Discuss/ File
R.A.	Letter re H.F Holidays offer	Discuss/ File
C.D.C.	Twmbarlum Trek	File
D.B.	E.mail re Outdoor Show	File
K.P.	Letter to new members	File
R.C.	E.mail from Ceri Thomas re Training Programme	Discuss File
K.P.	Letters to Adrian & Ramblers Cymru re SGR committee	File
A.S.	Notification of Area Meeting	Discuss File
F F	E.mail circulation to SGR members	Discuss File
  - 6.1.1. A minute from the Newport CC are planning a Coastal Path Walk with a working date of 5 May. Derek is trying to get the date changed to 6 May to fit our walks programme dates. Derek will keep in touch with the committee about any changes to the plan. See Derek's report for more details of the walk.
  - 6.1.2. Ken asked Fred about the progress in moving the web site back to its original URL. Fred had talked to Keith Cooper who said that progress was glacial since the holder of the original address is having personal problems and the hard disc containing the relevant data is encrypted and became corrupted. Getting the data from the disc is a glacially slow process. Add to that that Keith's girlfriend also has personal problems at the moment and it is still a case of wait and see.
  - 6.1.3. Ken noted that Robin and Rowena are due to marry on 23 June.

## 6.2. *Treasurer* Brian Williams

The Christmas dinner at the Newport Golf Club cost £379.50, and was totally covered by payments from the individual diners.

Ramblers Holidays Ltd. have paid £60 for the first advertisement in our November 2011 newsletter. H.F.Holidays offer £50 for those booking a holiday provided you have not travelled with them in the last 5 years. In addition they will donate £50 to the Ramblers Association for every booking using this offer.

We have still not received a refund from the Area account for £71.85, to cover the cost of organising the Area ramble.

Our current account with the Unity Bank totals £1,738.71, which is inclusive of the first 50% payment from the Area account. i.e. £433 against our budget request.

### **AGREED BUDGET AMOUNTS FOR 2011/2012**

(Figures in brackets refer to last year.)

(Amounts rounded up/down to nearest pound.)

	Budget	Expenditure	Balance	
Admin – Internet	(36)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Admin – K.Phillips	(133)	140	Nil	140
Prewalks	(289)	250	Nil	250
Publicity/ Walks programme	(417)	450	36	414
Meetings	(68)	70	81	-11
Donations:				
Ruperra Cons.Tr	(25)	25	25	Nil
Air Ambulance	(50)	50	Nil	50
	(1,018)	985	142	843
Less anticipated Income	(120)	120	120	
Balance to be refunded from area	(898)	865		
Position as at 2/2/12	142	723		

6.2.1. The cost of the Christmas dinner, £379.50

6.2.2. Brian has spoken to HF, asking if there were any special offers to be had from them for members: they promised to send him leaflets. The committee thought that the offer was restricted to the first holiday booked with HF and was small. Since many members have already booked holidays with them, there is not much advantage to the Group when booking an HF holiday. Fred noted that HF had told him that they advertise nationally and only advertise locally on a larger scale that we can provide and then only if there is guaranteed profit to be made. On a similar note, Fred agreed to look up the current offers from Ramblers Holidays. Brian noted that £60 was received from Ramblers Holidays from the advert in the South Gwent Ramblers newsletter.

6.2.3. Brian is trying to recover from Area the £72.85 spent on the Area walk.

6.2.4. We have £1739 in the current account, including 50% of the budget request of £865 budget. We have spent £140 leaving £723 from the budget.

### 6.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble

As expected, there has been very little communication from Newport CC on Public Right's Of Way matters, in fact nothing of any significance.

The British Horse Society are trying to upgrade a footpath to bridleway status at Langstone, which, if approved will not be detrimental to walkers. The case will go forward to Newport CC's cabinet and may end in a public enquiry. Historical evidence will be crucial in determining the outcome.

Support has been requested to prevent loss of high quality wildlife habitat on farmland to the east of the former police training centre in the centre of Cwmbran. A major housing development is being considered for this site, which would mean the loss of aerial views from well used PROW's which cross the land. I recommend opposing any future plans.

Support was also requested from villagers in Gwehelog regarding minor development of a property next to a footpath. Following a site visit, on the day of the Christmas lunch and walk, I suggest no more involvement, and subsequently the local Community Council have retrospectively approved the alterations.

Andy Briscombe is back at his desk in Newport CC's green team following his health scare and work is ongoing to increase the number of leafleted walks in the city area.

The opening of the Newport section of the Wales Coastal Path will take place on 5th or 6th May. The plan is to start from the transporter bridge, and the route will go to Bells Wharf, Solutia, the Waterloo at Nash (possibly for soft drinks), Wetlands circuit and back to the Wetlands Centre for refreshments and ceremony?

Coaches will return walkers to the transporter bridge.

Ramblers will be most welcome to join this walk etc.

There are a number of features on the walk, including new footpaths and boardwalks to enable access directly from the City.

### 6.4. *Rambles Officer* Dave Fereday

6.4.1. Dave said that we were still short of leaders.

6.4.2. Ken talked to Peter Elliott about the walk on Sunday 8 January being unusual in that it was a moderate medium walk when there was no long walk and it was also a success with a good turnout. The question arises "Why can't we do more walks like this?". Dawn and Peter have 6/7-mile moderate walks on the next programme. Dave already liaises with the NOGs for walks.

6.4.3. Fred posed a question of the possibility of organising walks "at home" when there were weekends away. Kens view on walks when there were weekends away was that there should be a normal walks programme for that weekend, if possible. He did suggest that this should *not* apply to one-day coach trips and other special SGR events.

### 6.5. *Membership Secretary*

6.5.1. Membership is static at 158.

6.5.2. A member complained when she did not receive correspondence from South Gwent Ramblers when she joined. This turned out to be because South Gwent Ramblers were not informed by the Ramblers Association. Maggie Smith for Greater Gwent Area has elicited a promise from the Ramblers Association that they will send her notification of any new members as soon as they can: she will then relay notification to the Groups.

### 6.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee

6.6.1. Received an offer from Koiran to ask her friend about how she publicised U3A and got 50 new members. Awaiting response.

6.6.2. What type of content in emails to south-gwent@virginmedia.com should be forward into circulation? Fred gave two examples of emails, one captaining a plea to join in a charity

walk and the other asking us to provide content for ebooks of individual walks. I thought that the first was outside our remit because We cannot help publicity events for another charity and the second was a blatant attempt to make money from our expertise. The committee agreed and Fred said that he had a good idea now as to what to circulate to members and what not to.

#### 6.7. *IT Officer's report* Fred Fee

- 6.7.1. Fred suggested that he set up an archives page on the web site featuring copies of the Newsletter similar to the page of newsletters on the Area web site and received a muted response.
- 6.7.2. Fred has been in touch with Keith about restoring the old web address for our web site. His girlfriend has suffered a family bereavement and he is still tied up with the repercussions of this at the moment. The acquaintance who was acting as provider for the web site had a problem with a hard drive that was corrupted by being accidentally encrypted. The disc is being decrypted at a glacially slow pace because of the strength of the encryption. I will keep in touch with Keith to try to get a result.

#### 6.8. *Area*

- 6.8.1. The Ramblers Association is introducing flexigroups. These are groups with a main contact person (equivalent to a Chairman) but with no other officers. The idea is to set up a flexigroup for a particular purpose helpful to the community and to which Ramblers Association Groups can lend some expertise. All members of flexigroups have to become Ramblers Association members.
- 6.8.2. Mulberry House, a private good quality hostel and outdoor centre in Abergavenny is seeking to set up the first flexigroup in Wales and possibly in Britain. They are expecting to do path clearing and helping erect stiles and suchlike as part of their remit as well as teach members about navigating and suitable gear for safely walking in hilly country. Mulberry house expect to run appropriate courses.
- 6.8.3. It is early days yet and more news will be forthcoming about the nature of the group and the nature of the assistance offered by the Ramblers Association as the nature of this flexigroup become clearer and the concept of flexigroups in general matures.

### 7. *Events Calendar*

- 7.1. The *Okehampton* trip has attracted 16 members.
- 7.2. Fred's *slide show* is set for Thursday 16 February at Newport Civic Centre.
- 7.3. We are looking forward to the *Skittles* evening on Thursday 22 March at Whiteheads.
- 7.4. After discussion the proposed trip to Church Stretton on 27 May was shelved although the trip itself will be considered for a future date.
- 7.5. Saturday 16 June for a week at *Crianlarich*, just north of Loch Lomond, for mostly strenuous walks. Accommodation and travel up to the individual. Dave has booked hostel accommodation.
- 7.6. Derek has shelved the idea of his June trip to Llangollen as it was too close to Dave's trip to *Crianlarich* for which hostel accommodation has already had to be booked.
- 7.7. Organisation for the trip to *Dartmouth* is well underway and is now set for 8 July. The trip features a train journey. Long walkers will alight for a 10-mile walk back. Short walkers will catch the train back so far and then follow the coastal path back to Paignton. Non-walkers will catch the train back. Food will be provided by the Palace Hotel with a two course meal costing £13.50 (or less for a greater number). Coach cost is £17 or less if we can attract 49. Total cost will be £36.50 for 49 or £41 for fewer. An alternative venue of a Toby Inn at Exeter was discussed, but the Palace was preferred.

- 7.8. Dave will book the *Boules* for July as soon as the venues Boules fixtures are published so that we do not clash with a league game.
- 7.9. We will once again hold our BBQ at Tintern on 5 August. Ken will ask Koirin to cater for us. Derek offered to lead a walk.
- 7.10. We will have our second coach trip to Bosherton Pools in Pembroke on 9 September. Ken will book the coach and a place to eat. Derek can provide a long walk. Brian and Ken could provide a walk past Castle Martin as long as there is no rifle practice on the day.
- 7.11. A trip to *Weymouth* from 8-12 October by bus with a stop at Welles met with approval. Hotel *Mon Ami* will provide accommodation for £184 (40 or more) or £199.30 (30 to 39) with a deposit needed by the end of February. Itinerary includes walks on Tuesday and Thursday with a day out on Wednesday to Bournemouth and Poole. Joan Lang has offered a walk and Charles Woods knows the area well and can provide a walk. If there is sufficient interest, Ken will send a letter of interest.
- 7.12. Thursday 15 November is pencilled in for the next *Skittles* match with Jan and Jen Wagenaar organising the food.
- 7.13. The date of the *South Gwent Ramblers AGM* is provisionally set for Sunday 18 November. The date will be finalised when the date of the Area AGM is known. The venue will once again be the Centenary Hall in Usk.

## 8. *AOB*

- 8.1. Ken noted that Ramblers Cymru is offering a social media workshop and training courses for walks leaders and coastal walks leaders.
- 8.2. Brian has walked round Ruperra and polished the plaque on the South Gwent Ramblers bench. He noted that the lacquer was beginning to peel and that the bench was in need of re-lacquering. He was open to offers of help.

## 9. *Next committee meeting* on 6 September.