



South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the Committee meeting held on
6 June 2013 at Newport Civic Centre

Members present - Roger Binding, Phyllis Clayton, Dawn Bishop, Fred Fee, Derek Humble, Joan Lang, Tony Phelps, Ken Phillips, Colin Wallace and SGR member Steve Atkins.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Brian Turner, Christine Burns, Liz Salmon, Dave Fereday and Adrian Sheehan.
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted.
3. *Matters arising from the minutes* are covered by matters which arose in the meeting.
4. *Officers' reports*

4.1. *Chairman* Ken Phillips

- 4.1.1. Ken noted that Ramblers Cymru are trawling for our views on protecting footpaths. Derek explained that maintaining footpaths is not very expensive to the Ramblers Association since fuel and materials are still provided by local authorities. Nevertheless, it is still crucial to keep our eyes on footpath care.
- 4.1.2. The RoW update said that footpath care budgets have generally been cut by a third and many councils view footpath care as a low priority. Derek noted that this was not the case in Newport.
- 4.1.3. Emails from a Monmouth Councillor came with a questionnaire on Llanbadoc Common. Derek said that he could deal with it.

4.2. *Secretary* Colin Wallace had nothing to report.

4.3. *Treasurer* Ken Phillips

Our bank balance at 31 May 2013 was £1404.05

We have received £380 of our allocation from area, £125 to come for the 4th qr.

Ramblers Holidays have continued to support us and we have received £120 for their adverts in our Newsletter.

We have repaid our loan to Area of £365 and also paid out £88 in respect of the costs of our AGM. We have continued our support of Ruperra and renewed our membership of £25. We finally own our website and have paid an amount of £126.40 in respect of it. Pre-walk expense to date is £37.

I have to complete a budget report for Area by the 13 July and need details of any expenditure we may incur up to the 30 September 2013. It was agreed we continue to make a £50 donation to Wales Air Ambulance. Please submit any pre-walk expense and any costs for our next walks programme such as stamps, toner, etc.

We have been informed by Ramblers Cymru that most of the Greater Gwent Groups have a cash reserve in excess of 40% of annual expenditure and need to reduce it accordingly over the next three years. SGR will have to comply with this request and need to consider how we are going to achieve this.

- 4.3.1. Ken asked for pre-walk expense requests to be made as soon as possible and asked about other expenses that may be relevant to our budget for next year.

- 4.3.2. Fred said that he would have to buy stamps for each run of programmes and newsletters and that he would have to buy envelopes and that he would check the condition of printer supplies and let Ken know the overall cost. Fred also agreed to place a pdf copy of the expenses request form on-line.
- 4.3.3. Ken would like estimates of any likely expenses for the next financial year to be emailed to him before 1 September.
- 4.3.4. Ken noted that the Ramblers Association asked us to reduce our reserves to about half of turnover, which is about £500. He thought that this would be enough and the committee agreed.
- 4.3.5. With regard to the details for the Christmas walk and lunch, Fred said that he would try to book the lunch at the Carpenter's Arms, Coed-y-Paen, informing Ken and Colin of the outcome.

4.4. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble

There is still very little communication from Newport City Council regarding footpath matters, which makes things easy for me.

Priory Farm at the Coldra has been sold and is in the process of being brought back to its former glory. Unfortunately the restorer hasn't kept the Council informed of his actions and has fallen foul of the law in several respects. The farm is now surrounded by steel remote controlled gates following thefts of materials, but they don't hinder walkers so I haven't objected.

I think that in time the farm will look the same as when it was built and will be of historic interest. The owner says he is keen to show anyone interested around the site.

A public right of way through Celtic Manor has been diverted as per an order which was agreed a couple of years ago. This makes for a better route with fine views all around and a couple of picnic benches as well.

Work is ongoing by Newport City Council and the volunteer group to provide a leafleted walk in the area of Bassaleg and the Graig Ward to be known as the Diamond Jubilee Walk. This new route is due to be opened at the end of June, and ramblers will be invited, although there will be little notice of the actual date. It is 10 miles and moderate.

Efforts continue to further improve the routes already in use by provision of steps, kissing gates and boardwalks and vegetation clearance.

- 4.4.1. Ken wondered why the numbers attending evening walks has dropped off. Joan thought that it might have something to do with the start time and wondered if 6.30pm would be a better time than 7pm which is unpopular even with good weather and long evenings. Phyllis and Joan noted that the problem had been on-going for the last few years. Dawn suggested reminder emails. Roger noted the local historical society met on Wednesdays and that some who attended were SGR members. Fred wondered if a day other than Wednesday would attract more walkers, but the meeting thought it unlikely.

4.5. *Rambles Officer* Ken spoke in the absence of Dave Fereday

The dates for various events are as follows:

Area Walk	22 September
Area AGM	3 November hosted by Islwyn Group
SGR AGM	11 November probably at Usk as last year

- 4.6. *Membership Secretary* Dawn Dawn's report is not yet ready. Ken, looking at Fred, noted that he was still getting phone calls about membership and thought that the web site may need to be changed.
- 4.7. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee said that he did the usual stuff in editing, printing and distributing the programmes and newsletters in paper and electronic form.

4.8. *IT Officer's report* Fred kept the web site update with changes arising from the walks programme, events and an update of the software used to produce the site. Fred also circulated any emails that he received from the site and deemed worthy of member's valuable attention.

5. *Events calendar*

5.1. *Okehampton* went well as usual.

5.2. *Ironbridge* Dave will lead an 8-mile from Meadow Inn walk and Tony a 5-mile walk to Meadow Inn. Ken will organise the tourist side. The leaders will meet beforehand to discuss timings.

5.3. *Boules* is booked for 16 July and Maureen Fee will fill in the Boules sheet.

5.4. Ken booked the *Barbecue* for 11 August at Tintern. John and Doug will cook and Koiran James will organise provisions and refreshments. Derek will lead the walk before the food.

5.5. *Winchester* Ian will lead a long walk and Brian Williams will lead a short walk. Steve Atkins said that he could lead a walk or advise on routes since he knows the area well.

5.6. *Jersey* Ken now has 42 names for the trip. Roger will provide long walks on Tuesday and Thursday whilst Ken will organise a bus trip for the Wednesday possibly including a visit to a Jersey Zoo. Koiran has offered short walks.

5.7. The *Christmas Dinner* will be held at the Park again and Fred will try to book the Carpenter's Arms and lead the walk for the *Christmas walk and meal*.

6. *AOB*

6.1. Colin said that Sue Shae attended a walk lead by Paul Mellor that had a grade of "Moderate" in the programme. The walk was a long one (13 miles) and she felt that the length should have been graded as "Strenuous". Ken said that leaders should err on the side of caution. Fred said that some years ago such a walk would be considered as "Moderate" for its length because it was relatively flat. However, currently, walks are generally shorter than they were then, but we still grade them on the same system. We will discuss the subject in more detail at our next meeting,

6.2. Colin noted that Richard Atack is 50 on Saturday (8 June) and that he has sent him a card on behalf of the SGR.

7. *Next committee meeting* on Thursday 19 September.