

Members present - Roger Binding, Dawn Bishop, Phyllis Clayton, Fred Fee, Derek Humble, Joan Lang, Ken Phillips.

1. *Apologies for absence* Dave Fereday
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted
3. *Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting on 19 September 2013*
 - 3.1. *Re para 4.2.2*, Phyllis asked how a Red Cross first aid course differs from a Mountain Rescue course. Fred recalled that the Mountain Rescue course focussed more on South Gwent Ramblers needs. Ken said that Jan Waagener was close to the Mountain Rescue team and would ask him to get in touch with them on our behalf, Dawn reminded Ken that it was she could get in touch with the Mountain Rescue team.
 - 3.1.1. Phyllis asked how the Red Cross and Mountain Rescue first aid courses differ. Fred replied that the Mountain Rescue course was more focussed on outdoor activity as far as he could recall. Ken thought that Jan Wagenaar was close to the Mountain Rescue and he could ask him to get in touch. Dawn indicated that it was she, rather than Jan who was close to Maintain rescue and that she would investigate..
 - 3.2. *Re paras 4.6.1 and 5.1*, Ken asked Fred if he had been in touch with Newport CC and Fred confessed that he had not but, head bowed, promised to do so before the next meeting. Likewise Fred had not produced a calendar and promised to consider doing so this year.
4. *Matters arising from the minutes of the 2013 AGM on 17 November 2013*
 - 4.1. *Re para 4.1* Sadly, Ken reported that Arthur Butt had died. He was one of SGR's great characters and will be missed by all. Ken carried more bad news, Harry Packer had also died.
 - 4.2. *Re para 4.2.1* Ken has now registered SGR with Ramblers Holidays Walking Partnership and will include details in our next newsletter. In the meantime perhaps Fred can put in on the SGR web site.
 - 4.3. *Re para 4.3* The location of the wind turbine and solar array panels tis on the border of the areas covered by South Gwent Ramblers and another Greater Gwent Group. In such cases, responsibility will now be shared between the relevant Groups. Greater Gwent Area has therefore supplied Derek with a the contact details of Footpaths Officers in the Area.
 - 4.4. *Re para 4.4.2* Ken has spoken to Dave and he will monitor the situation once he has further details of the NOGs and History Societies activities.
5. *Officers' reports*
 - 5.1. *Secretary* Dawn Bishop who volunteered to cover for Colin Wallace
 - 5.1.1. Colin is up to date with emails and other electronic communication, using his iPad to work krpp up his work while in and around Panama.
 - 5.1.2. On 25 January the Twmbarlwm Society are holding a "Tidy Tump" volunteer work day to clean up the Tump run by Maggi Smith (Gelligaer Group). Meet at the new car park at the foot of the Tump of Twmbarlwm at 10:30am.

5.2. *Treasurer* Ken Phillips

- 5.2.1. Our bank balance at 1 November 2013 was £1128.66
- 5.2.2. Our budget request to Area for 2013/14 amounting to £790 was approved and we had £395 in respect of the first 6 months at the end of November 2013. We have also received £60 from Ramblers Holidays for our November advert. Payments for our AGM (£60.60 and £25.00), 30th Anniversary Cake (£20.40) and Ruperra Trust Membership (£25.00) have been made to date.
- 5.2.3. Our bank balance at 23rd January 2014 is £1452.66
- 5.2.4. Our budget includes amounts for First Aid Courses and Walks Leaders Courses and we need to decide on our plans for these projects.

5.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble

- 5.3.1. Since the last report in November 2013 there have been two notable planning applications for solar panel installations affecting PRoW's.
- 5.3.2. One is at Llanmartin, in a position where very few people will see it, but it does affect the views from a local path, although only in one or two fields. I have decided not to object, but have asked for conditions to be attached to allow more width for the existing path to mitigate the effects of invasive vegetation and hedgerow growth.
- 5.3.3. The other is just outside our boundary to the north of Wentwood at Pen y Cae Mawr. This application is for 45 acres of panels in a sensitive location and everyone from Lord Crickhowell to the local Community Council has voiced their objections as have I.
- 5.3.4. An objection has also been sent regarding moving the line of a diagonal field path at Marshfield so that it runs around two sides of the field. Fencing in a path in this way increases the burden of maintenance on the Council, and eventually the path can be lost if not regularly used.

5.4. *Rambles Officer* Dave Fereday

- 5.4.1. Boules is booked for Tuesday 15th July meals as last year £6.50.
- 5.4.2. As arranged at the AGM, for the evening walks we will walk Wednesday one week and then Thursday the alternate week to avoid clash with Local History Society. If the committee are in agreement when I put my request out next month this will reflect this. [The committee agreed to this].
- 5.4.3. My coach trip suggestion was Laugharne. The walk is on the Weatherman Walking website as it was done by Derek Brockway for his programme. The non walkers can explore Laugharne taking in the Castle, Brown's Hotel etc. The walk is about 5 miles which is ideal for the short walkers and I can extend the walk for the long walkers. All we need is a volunteer short walk leader if we decide on this option. I am able to do a recce trip anytime after 1st April.
- 5.4.4. My only comment on the holiday are as advised during our phone conversation. I would suggest we leave it at least a year before we go the Guernsey as we were in Jersey last year. I think Derek's idea of Barmouth is excellent. It would also be my preference for people to make our own way their by car so if people want to extend their stay in north Wales they can.

5.5. *Membership Secretary* Joan Lang reported that the total membership of South Gwent Ramblers was 137 at 1 February 2014. Up to this date there have been no new members. The 137 members are classified as follows:

Annual - Individual 55 (3 pending)

Annual - Joint 35 (2 pending)

Annual Concession - Individual 31 (2 pending)

Annual Concession - Joint 15 (2 pending)

Life Concession - Individual 1 (0 pending)

5.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee said that there was nothing of import since the AGM except that he would have to get in touch with Joan about what data to place on the Ramblers web site now that she is membership secretary.

5.7. *IT Officer's report* Fred Fee is continuing to update the web sites and field queries from the forms on the web sites. He has been in touch with Maurice Turner who runs the Area and Lower Wye Group web sites about looking at how they and other Groups use Wordpress to publish their sites.

5.8. *Area representative* Adrian Sheehan said that nothing has happened since the AGM.

6. *Events calendar*

6.1. *Okehampton* – 20 of us are going. Ken pleased to confirm that Jean Butt is joining us this year. Taha is unable to make it this year, could it be that Farah has finally arrived.

6.2. *Skittles* - Whiteheads is booked for 13 March to start at 7:30pm. They have agreed to cancel the £100 bond they originally asked for, however we have paid the £30 deposit needed to secure our booking.

6.3. *Scotland* - Ian is still in the throes of trying to organise a joint trip with the NOGs to the Outer Hebrides. Looks like the trip will be in May. Ken was told on 12 January 2004 that there is another trip planned by Colin and Sue in June and certain members of our group are thinking of going with them. He knew nothing of this and said that, if true, he was far from impressed.

6.4. *1st Coach Trip - Weston* - 22 June - Ray and Cath will organise a walk from Sand Bay and then continuing on to Weston. The short walkers can get back on the coach after Sand bay and ride to Weston. Ray suggested Wetherspoons for a meal. Peter recently had a meal in Ebbw Vale Wetherspoons and said it was good.

6.5. *Boules* - As noted above, Dave has booked the Wheatsheaf for Tuesday 15th July with meals as last year @ £6.50.

6.6. *Barbecue* - Tintern is proposed as the venue, the date being 10 August. Ken will book the site at the Old Station and collect the names. Ken will ask Koirin, John and Doug if the date is suitable and whether they will once again help. Derek has agreed to lead the walk.

6.7. *2nd Coach Trip* - Laugharne to be booked for 27 July. Dave and Ken need to sort out what the itinerary will be, bearing in mind that the date of the 1st coach trip is now down for 22 June 2014. Dawn has volunteered to lead the short walk.

6.8. *Week Away* - Guernsey, Newquay and Barmouth Bay were suggested at the AGM. Ken gave quotes From IOW tours for all three. We need to decide which one to proceed with:

Guernsey - Pandora Hotel St Peters Port - £269 includes coach and ferry costs,
Barmouth - Min y Mor Hotel - £265 includes coach costs,
Newquay - Esplanade Hotel - £239 includes coach costs. Hotel has indoor pool.

6.8.1. Dave suggested leaving another Jersey trip until next year and going to Barmouth by car. Adrian thought that we could find out how many were interested in going and hire a suitable (smaller?) coach. Ken said that we must have a bus or go by car: there can be no half measures. Adrian therefore suggested booking a coach for which everyone interested should pay and those who wanted to use a car could still do so. Ken queried the availability of, say 10, single rooms at Barmouth and Derek said that it would not be a problem. The committee decided that we should go to Barmouth in October outside any school holidays.

7. *Next committee meeting* on 10 April 1014.