

1.

2. *Members present* - Roger Binding, Phyllis Clayton, Fred Fee, Dave Fereday, Derek Humble, Joan Lang, Ken Phillips, Colin Wallace.

3. *Apologies for absence* None

4. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted

5. *Matters arising from the minutes*

5.1. *Re para 3.1* **First Aid Courses** – There have only been two members Koirin and Ena who have replied to my article in the March Newsletter stating their interest in attending a course. A few of the committee have said they might be interested and I have e.mailed John Ebdon to see what can be arranged.

5.2. *Re para 3.2* **Walking Partnership** – We are now registered with RAWP & details were printed in the Newsletter. I recently had a letter from them advising that none of our members have taken advantage of the scheme to date. Fred tells me he has recently booked a holiday and if he will give me details I will chase up our bonus.

6. *Officers' reports*

6.1. *Secretary* Colin Wallace has booked Llanishen Village Hall for the AGM and Roger has volunteered to lead the walk.

6.2. *Treasurer* Ken Phillips

Our bank balance at 30th September 2014 was £1382.59

We started the year (1st October 2013) with a balance of £1128.66 which means we made a profit of £253.93 this year. Budget-wise we have spent £657.51 of the £910.00 applied for. We had planned to spend £450 on publicity, newsletters and programmes but ended up spending 242.89.

Our reserves are much higher than they should be to meet the Charity Commission regulations. We had planned to hold Walks Leader & First Aid courses which would have reduced our reserves however the response was poor from our members and they were not held. I have contacted John Ebdon (who was recommended by Dawn Bishop) to see what can be achieved in 2014/15.

I have reduced our Budget request for 2014/15 to £565.00 which based on this years expenditure should reduce our reserves.

6.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble

There has been a few complaints regarding footpath usability via our website, those in Monmouthshire area have been logged and one in Newport has been put right within about a week of receipt.

Wind turbine proposals are still in evidence as the feed-in tariffs are being reduced again in the near future.

I have objected to an application for one at Clearwell Farm which would dwarf the existing turbine to which I did not object. This would ruin many views towards the Ridgeway near Ruppera and hopefully the planners will see sense.

The planned turbine near Llanwern has been turned down as it would spoil the countryside in this protected location. There is still an order limiting large scale construction within the Llanwern Hall area! The Hall was demolished years ago.

I was saddened to receive a Modification Order to impose a bridleway through Llandeud Mill. Welsh Ministers have approved this due to new evidence apparently coming to light. I am going to view it and if necessary, challenge this at the Civic Centre tomorrow.

Several people are objecting to this plan which would see part of the footpath network churned up by horses which would then have to negotiate crossing the A48 on a bend!

We all believe there has never been anything other than a footpath through this piece of land and would like it to stay as it is. The landowner even mows the path for our benefit.

6.4. *Rambles Officer* Dave Fereday

Last year I broke with my tradition and did not confirm how many miles we walked during the twelve month period. As Country Walking magazine is advocating that people to keep fit should walk 1000 miles per annum I thought I would I would confirm the total for the period between our two AGMS.

They are:

Long Walks	449 miles
Medium Walks	61 miles
Evening Walks	67 miles

I appreciate that the distances above do not include walks undertaken on the coach trips and the weeks away. However if you managed to walk every long Sunday walk and every evening walk you would still be well short of the suggested Country Walking target. So the message is don't drive to go shopping when you can walk. But of course it is not my purpose to advocate personal fitness but to coordinate the walks available to members.

What I must add of course is that in addition to the above mileage we enjoyed day coach trips to Weston-super-Mare and Laugharne, where we joined in the celebration of Dylan Thomas' centenary. There were also residential trips to Dartmoor in February and Barmouth in October.

For a change my report this year will focus on the Evening Walks. If you recall we decided at the AGM last year to experiment with the day of the week and then review the outcome at the next AGM. This was due to avoid a clash on alternate Wednesdays with meetings of the Newport Local History Club as many members, myself included, are members of both organisations.

Consequently the summer programme for 2014 had our evening walks alternating between Wednesdays and Thursdays. Well that next AGM has now arrived and either immediately following my report or during any other business we have the opportunity to discuss what we should do with the evening walks next year. Before we do, I must put a slight spanner in the works. It has been mentioned whether we should even continue with our evening walks. I personally think that to finish with the evening walks would be a bad decision. Now I am retired I can walk all day every day if I so wish. However when I was working the opportunity to walk after work was a brilliant antidote to the working environment. Therefore if we do finish with midweek walks it would be a grave injustice to those members who are still in employment. Additionally over the years we have several members who have started with midweek walks before progressing to weekend walks, so in short it would be losing a simple way of evangelising the joys of walking to potential new members.

However I can't help but finish with a little bit of déjà-vu. As in previous years we are still desperately short of volunteers to lead the medium walks.

6.4.1. Dave reported that he asked members to volunteer walks for the programme beginning in December.

6.4.2. Joan noticed that there was a good turn-out for a moderate walk programmed on the same day as a very strenuous one. She thought that this was because some members

were not keen on very strenuous walks but still wanted a long walk: she therefore asked whether moderate walks of, say, 6-8 miles could be provided on days when there was a strenuous walk. The committee thought that this was a good idea. Dave will try so to arrange the walks programme.

6.5. *Membership Secretary* Joan Lang reported that we now have 141 members.

6.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee had nothing to report.

6.7. *IT Officer's report* Fred Fee

Summer / Autumn programme publication went well thanks to Dave's faultless presentation of the walks programme and the upload to the Ramblers Association site was trouble free.

I have continued to monitor the input from the South Gwent Ramblers sites and respond as necessary.

From 15 September new features on Ramblers Association web site have been implemented. The way in which walks are uploaded has become more complicated and it will make the uploading of the next programme interesting. There is also web space for all Groups to have their own presence on the Ramblers Association site. The default Ramblers Association presence is edited from the site itself by using a password. I have placed a small site there with an attractive image and some jolly text exhorting the multitudes to visit our main and mobile sites.

I have started to collect material for the calendar.

7. *Area* Ken Phillips in the absence of Adrian Sheehan

7.1. Ken noted that the last Area meeting featured the budget which provided no problems and the proposed Ebbw Vale Motor Racing Site which does. The Ramblers Association sanctioned all Group and Area budgets and paid as requested. It looks like planning permission will be granted for the Motor Racing Site and that there will be problems with existing footpaths and proposed diversions.

7.2. Re the Area AGM, Fred said that members can meet at the Civic Centre to leave at 9am or go to Goytre Village Hall, Penperlleni directly to leave at 10am. He will email active members of the Group with the arrangements, as well as arrangements for the South Gwent Ramblers AGM, Skittles, the Christmas Meal and the Christmas Walk and Lunch.

8. *Events calendar*

Previous events

8.1. **Scotland** Ian's trip was a success despite suffering innumerable attacks by wild haggis.

8.2. **Weston (22 June)** An excellent day out by coach, which was complemented by an Air Display when we arrived in Weston.

8.3. **Boules (15th July)** A good turn out, good weather, good food and the usual pin-sharp competition kept the fun coming all evening, despite the temperature dropping towards the end of proceedings.

8.4. **The Barbecue at Tintern** was booked for the 10 August but hurricane Bertha was forecast and we made the right decision and cancelled the event.

8.5. **Laugharne (27 July)** Another good day which was complemented by our choice of venue for our coffee stop and evening meal. The views from The Mansion House in Llanstephan were fantastic and the food equally as good.

8.6. **Barmouth (6-10 October)** Thirty-six of us made the trip. My thanks to Derek for choosing the venue and the hotel, both were excellent. Unfortunately, Koiran had to drop out: Denise and her helpers Jean and Fred were kind enough to sort out the medium walk which passed Cutiau and Gelfawr. Long walkers climbed Cadair Idris and the next day walked round the Mawddach Estuary. The scenic trip to Portmeirion and Betws-y-Coed was enjoyed by all. The weather could have been better but it was an improvement on earlier forecasts.

Future events

- 8.7. **Area AGM (2 November)** Hosted by Pontypool Group, a walk will leave from the Goetre Community Hall, Penperlleni at 10am and, after a light lunch the meeting should start at about 1pm. Fred will wait at the Newport Civic centre and inform the membership of a 9am start to give plenty of time to make the 10am start at the venue
- 8.8. **SGR AGM (16 November)** We are meeting at the Village Hall in Llanishen, just north of Devauden. Colin and Sue organised the booking and have kindly agreed to organise the catering once again this year. Roger and Colin will pre-walk with a view to leading a walk in the morning.
- 8.9. **SGR Christmas Dinner (11 December)** The Parc Golf Club wanted us to guarantee numbers this year which might have been difficult to achieve. Ken had a look around various other venues but finally settled on Newport Golf Club. Times and date for the Dinner remain the same.
- 8.10. **Westonbirt Enchanted Evening** Phyllis did some preliminary work regarding the visit. However the possible itinerary would have been very complex when the Arboretum would have been jam packed. After a short discussion we decided the it was impractical to proceed with the trip.
- 8.11. **Christmas walk and lunch (30 December)** Fred has booked the venue - The Cripple Creek pub/restaurant and pre-walked with Ted and Roger.
- 8.12. **Skittles** has been booked for 12 March at Whiteheads as usual.

Possible events for 2015

- 8.13. Ken has conducted a straw poll of reaction to a suggestion of another trip to Okehampton in February but found little enthusiasm for it. Ken would organise such a trip and will raise the matter at the AGM.
- 8.14. Suggestions from the committee for trips in 2015 included Guernsey, somewhere near Newquay and North Devon with the latter receiving a very positive response.
- 8.15. The Barbecue should take place in August
9. *AOB* None
10. *Next committee meeting* at the South Gwent Ramblers AGM on 16 December.