



South Gwent Ramblers



Minutes of the AGM held on
25 October 2007

Members present – Brian Williams, Val Clark, Derek Humble, Ken Phillips, Diana Osman, Christine Platteeuw, Adrian Sheehan, Julie Hepburn and Brian Turner.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Fred and Maureen Fee, Dave Fereday and Lorna Hall.
2. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted.
3. *Matters arising from the minutes*
 - 3.1. Adrian's trip to France took place in May and was an outstanding success.
 - 3.2. Twenty eight of our members travelled to Newquay, Cornwall in October. A first class hotel, excellent weather and walks.
 - 3.3. Our coach trip to Tewkesbury included a full itinerary and the afternoon walk proved to be a bit arduous for some members. The meal at Dumbleton Hall was very good.
 - 3.4. Wet, wet, Westerbirt. Our coach trip to the Arboretum was dogged by poor weather, but the Lady Guide in the afternoon was fantastic and made the day.
 - 3.5. No trip to Lyme Regis but our coach trip to Exmouth and Bicton Botanical gardens more than made up for it. Thanks Mary.
 - 3.6. Our BBQ was held at Cwmcarn . Excellent weather, food and walk. Our thanks to Kath, Fred and Adrian.
 - 3.7. Our second Skittles evening was as well supported as the first. Andrew Morgan was the new Alley Star. Our thanks once again to Kath.

4. *Chairman's Forward* Ken Phillips

Welcome to our A.G.M. Another year hits the dust but the good news is we can look forward to the next one. Last year was once again a good one for our group and my appeal for new committee members rewarded us with two excellent candidates. Unfortunately we lost two namely Howard Harvey and Lorraine Bird. Howard has been troubled by ill health for some time and we wish him well for better health in the future. Lorraine has not rejoined our group, possibly due to her work commitments. So we are looking for two replacements. How about you being one !!

2006/07 has not been the best year for a few of our walkers. Beryl Beer has had a few operations this year, so let's hope we all enjoy good health this coming year.

My thanks as per usual to my fellow officers and all who help keep our group going.

5. *Officers' reports*

5.1. *Secretary* Ken Phillips

Apart from keeping our members happy we have also supported the Gwent Association for the Blind once again this year. We led a walk around Ruperra and also arranged a coach trip to Kenfig and Porthcawl for them. They are very appreciative of our efforts and if any member would like to take part in future events please give me a ring.

We also continue to support The Ruperra Trust. They have been experiencing problems with the owner of the castle. He has applied for planning permission to build houses on the site which is contrary to aims of the Trust.

Our social events have been well supported and our Christmas, Skittles and Slide Show evenings something to look forward to. Our thanks to those members for organising them.

Let us not forget our hardy members who give of their time to maintain our footpaths and styles. Thanks folks.

5.2. *Treasurer* Brian Williams – (see below for audited accounts sheet)

The change from Group funding, based on membership numbers, to a budgeted basis has gone smoothly. The budget request for year ending 30.9.7 was overstated, mainly as the anticipated requests for pre walk expenses did not materialise, but for this year a more accurate assessment has been possible and a lesser amount is now requested. We aim to keep a working balance of £1,000.

Under the heading Charitable objectives - Footpaths, Countryside Protection and Access only incur a small expense, this is in part, because the local council fund the maintenance of footpaths in our area.

The majority of our expenses come under the heading of Promoting Walking.

All social events and coach trips have either broken exactly even or made a small profit.

5.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble

The past year has seen a lot of small items to consider and comment on. There have been a number of path extinguishments, diversions and proposed developments close to rights of way.

Most of the cases required little or no action on our behalf, and two of the diversions will prove to be of benefit in years to come.

It remains to be seen if the road improvements on Catsash Road for the Ryder Cup will make for safer pedestrian passage along the Usk Valley Walk which goes along this road. I asked Newport City Council to consider this at the planning stage.

The proposed diversion at Cefn Henllan, Llangibby still hasn't been resolved, but at least it hasn't been granted.

Our objection to a diversion at Llandevaud has been upheld, thereby maintaining a pleasant meadow path out of the village.

Three footpaths have been realigned at Newport Golf Club in the interests of Health and Safety and this also makes the grounds of Risca Comprehensive School more secure.

We are generally in agreement with Newport City Council's Right of Way Improvement Plan which is now due for publication.

I have received a few complaints of path blockages in Torfaen and Monmouthshire Council areas from members of the public via our website and these have been reported and some of them cleared.

The R.A. has scored a notable victory in the House of Lords which means that in future actions to stop paths being recognised as rights of way must be transparent.

There is still a debate over the proposed housing development at Cot Hill Llanwem, but from our perspective, this only affects two paths which are to remain if this goes ahead.

Derek also reported that the Newport CC Footpaths Officer advised us of a meeting held at the Civic Centre last Monday to discuss the Coastal Access Campaign.

Beverley Penny (RA) Derek Humble (SGR) and Helen Howlett (NCC Coastal Access Officer) attended.

5.4. *Rambles Officer* Christine Patteeuw

My sincere thanks goes to the members within our group who have taken on the task of Walk Leaders and used their inspiration to provide a wide variety of walks for our programmes. I can only acknowledge what Adrian always said : "You are at the heart of our group".

We had over 80 walks organized in the past year, with grades ranging from the very easy for people with not much mobility or with health problems, to the leisurely and moderate type walks for the reasonable fit and finally, for those who like a challenge, a good offering of strenuous walks to test fitness and stamina.

A special welcome to our new Walk Leaders for this year : Diana Osman, Christine Brian and Paul Mellor. You have done a brilliant job and I hope you enjoyed the leading as much as we enjoyed your walks.

I would like to take the opportunity again to ask for more people to become involved in leading or proposing walks for our group. As the saying goes : 'Many hands make work light'.

Unfortunately, we find it increasingly more difficult finding enough volunteers willing to lead the shorter, easy to moderate type walks, normally organized every other weekend. This might lead to a reduced offering on our programme unless more people come forward to help out.

My thanks also to Ian Reese for organizing both the theoretical and practical "Map and Compass" sessions. For anyone in doubt of being able to lead walks, this is an excellent introduction when looking to build up your personal navigation skill. It is also a valuable refresher course for those already familiar with a lot of the OS map symbols and route-finding techniques. I hope this may lead to more people feeling confident enough for taking on the challenge of leading walks for the group.

Apart from our local walks which were mainly in the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons, we also had a good selection of Coach Trip rambles, organized by our Chairman Ken Philips. All which proved very popular with enjoyable walks suitable for all abilities. In May we had the coach trip to Westonbirt Arboretum, in June the coach trip to Exmouth, in September coach trip to Tewkesbury and in October, a weekend away to Cornwall with walks around Newquay. Thanks Ken for making these a success.

Last but not least, thanks to Kath Carter and Fred Fee for organizing the BBQ and feeding the hungry rambblers at the end of our walk on Aug. 12th. It was a real treat, much appreciated by all present.

It has been another successful walking year in which we again have been able to enjoy a lot of our local natural beauty. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on our walks in the coming year.

5.5. *Membership Secretary* Val Clark

SGR Membership 2006/7

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
197	198	197	196	196	195	197	198	196	198	196	192

Area Membership 2006/7

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
948	950	944	945	952	950	950	952	951	952	952	952

Both SGR and Area membership have remained fairly consistent throughout the year. We on the one hand failed to reach our 200 target and Area on the other the magical 1000 . We will both strive to attain these numbers next year as I am sure we can do it with a bit more effort.

5.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee

Edited, printed and distributed the Summer programme. Copies given to Newport, Abergavenny and Caerphilly Tourist Information Offices together with a poster of the walks.

Received a bundle of RA membership forms which I will interleave with the next programme for distribution to TIOs.

SGR gets a mentions in the Newport Activity Guide for the over 60s.

Sent details of our walks to the Monmouthshire Green Directory.

Discuss wetlands email?

I am emailing as I feel that the following could be of interest to you. I have just been appointed as the Community Outreach Officer for the RSPB and my role is to create links between community groups and organisations that would be interested in using the Newport Wetlands as a resource.

You maybe aware that at present a new building is underway to provide an information and resource centre for all to use. The centre will also offer conference rooms and teaching rooms that could be used to your advantage. The wetlands also offers training for volunteers to work on the site which could be an interest to those who

have an interest in environmental work and wishing to gain an insight to conservation whilst promoting therapeutic, emotional and social well being. The site also provides an area of beauty with a walk way that leads right around the site which therefore could possibly be incorporated into one of your walks.

The Wetland Reserve is an up and coming site with much gained interest throughout Newport that offers a wide range of learning for all ages, I feel that the RSPB can help to provide support to all who wish to consider becoming involved or just by using the resource within the reserve with a possibility of working together to deliver projects and programmes that will benefit people.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me on 07737678970 or to email me with a hope that we could meet and discuss future possibilities with your organisation using the resource for any future ideas that you may have.

Looking forward to your reply,

Kind Regards

Marie Preston

RSPB Community Outreach Officer (Newport)

5.7. IT Officer's report Keith Cooper was not present.

6. Election of Officers

Chairman	Ken Phillips	Rambles Officer	Christine Platteeuw
Secretary	Ken Phillips	Footpath Officer	Derek Humble
Treasurer	Brian Williams	Publicity Officer.....	Fred Fee
Minute Secretary	Fred Fee	Membership Secretary	Val Clark
	I.T. Officer	Keith Cooper	

Committee:

Ted Cleveley	Kath Carter	Adrian Sheehan	Jan Wagenaar
Diana Osman	Julie Hepburn	Brian Turner	

Area Council and Welsh Council — Adrian Sheehan

Auditor - Alun Booth

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the two members of the committee who had stepped down. Howard Harvey for health reasons and Lorraine Bird due to work commitments. He also welcomed our two new members Julie Hepburn and Brian Turner.

South Gwent Ramblers

Statement of Accounts Year ending 30 September 2007

	£	£	£
Opening balance 1 October 2006			<u>924.20</u>
Income			
Christmas dinner	579.12		
RA Holidays advertisements	80.00		
Allocation from Area — Membership	1446.00		
Coach ramble — Westonbirt	330.00		
Coach ramble — Exmouth	630.00		
Coach Ramble — Tewkesbury	360.00		
Newquay weekend deposit refund	200.00		
Cwmcarn barbecue	12.00		
Interest — Unity bank	<u>42.84</u>		
		<u>3679.96</u>	
Expenditure			
Christmas dinner	570.00		
Coach Ramble — Westonbirt	330.00		
Coach Ramble — Exmouth	626.95		
Coach Ramble — Tewkesbury	360.00		
Newquay weekend deposit	200.00		
RA Charitable Objectives			
Footpaths	9.00		
Countryside protection	0.00		
Access	25.00		
Promoting walking			
Administration/Publicity	575.56		
Pre-walk expenses	<u>372.25</u>		
	<u>947.81</u>		
		<u>3068.76</u>	
Excess of income over expenditure			<u>611.20</u>
Closing balance 30 September 2007			<u>1535.40</u>

Balance sheet 30 September 2007

	2007	2006	2005	2004
Unity Bank	<u>1535.40</u>	<u>924.20</u>	<u>1365.37</u>	<u>1214.15</u>

B Williams Esq
Treasurer

T A L Booth Esq
Auditor

15 October 2007

