

Members present - Ken Phillips, Jean Butt, Arthur Butt, John Blakemore, Diane Blakemore, Mary Raymond, Adrian Sheehan, Dave Fereday, Brian Williams, Phyllis Clayton, Joan Lang, Diana Osman, Ted Clevely, Tony Phelp, Christine Platteeuw, Paul Coleman, Diane Thomas, Alison Cantelo, David Cantelo, Janet Gillum, Pam Jones, Maureen Fee, Fred Fee, Margaret Woodward, Robin Hilborne, John Kingdom, John Smith, Derek Humble, Denise Humble, Margaret Nunn, Linda Westerberg, Sandra Cocksedge, Doug Cocksedge, Richard Attack, Ken Phillips, Val Clark, Kath Carter, Paul Mellor, Sidney Carnell and Charles Woods.

1. *Apologies for absence* from Gill Griffin, Helen Elliott, Peter Elliott, Colin Wallace, Lorna Hall, Ian Reese and Keith Cooper.

2. *Chairman's welcome* Ken Phillips

Welcome to our AGM. Once again we are sitting in Llanishen Village Hall. My thanks to Diana for setting it up and for leading our morning walk. I trust you all enjoyed the buffet and for that I must thank Kath and Val for their help.

2009/10 has been a good year for SGR. Despite having our budget cut by 35%, we have managed to keep our head above water. The decision to have extra coach trips this year proved to be a good one as they were all fully booked and enjoyed by all. Our request for new walks leaders resulted in a few taking up the challenge. Thanks to those of you who did.

Sadly we have lost a few of our long term members this year. Some through ill-health and a few moving out of our area. We wish them well in the coming year.

Finally my thanks to the Officers and Committee for their help through out the year.

3. *Minutes of last meeting* were adopted

4. *Matters arising from the minutes* None

5. *Officers' reports*

5.1. *Secretary* Ken Phillips presented his report:

As you are aware we have always supported the Gwent Association for the blind (GAB), so it is with great sadness that I have to report that they are disbanding in December. They have done some sterling work in the past and we can only hope that they will be able to do so again in the future.

The Ruperra Trust are another organisation which we support. The Trust was successful in its objection to the owner of the castle building houses on the site, however it is now up for sale. Its future is in the hands of CADW, Caerphilly CBC and the Welsh Assembly. The financial climate being what it is, nothing is likely to happen quickly. The Friends of Ruperra continue with their excellent work in the grounds.

Our social events were a success once again. The weather put a dampener on our Boules evening but we all enjoyed the Bar Supper and the good old chat that went with it. We will try again next year. If any member has any ideas on future social events for the group please let us know.

5.2. *Treasurer* Brian Williams presented his report:

The audited accounts for the year are submitted for your perusal (see end of these minutes).

A year ago I reported that the Rambler's Association was in financial difficulties and the budget request for the coming year would more than likely be capped, thus reducing our reserves in the process, which in fact occurred, with the allocation being some £400 short.

We were again asked to submit a budget in July 1010, detailing our costs for the coming year. At the time rumours were circulating indicating a repeat situation. I am pleased to say these proved fruitless and we are advised by the Ramblers Association that the request will be met in full. However, the figure was compiled with cost savings very much in mind, so during this year we must continue to 'watch our pennies'.

All the social events, financially, broke even.

5.2.1. Brian noted that we now have £1185 in the bank.

5.2.2. Ken explained how he runs the coach trips. Any profits from one trip are ploughed back into the next trip and the cost to members reflects this.

5.2.3. Ken said that, for pre-walks more than 40 miles away, he does not claim expenses at the mileage rate, but merely claims the fuel costs. He proposed that we adopt this procedure and the meeting agreed.

5.3. *Footpaths Officer* Derek Humble presented his report:

The past twelve months has seen many items to consider and comment upon.

There have been a number of proposed path diversions and also developments close to rights of way. Although most of the cases required little or no action on our behalf, some will be of benefit for the future due to ease of use.

A number of paths have been diverted from the curtilage of properties, and others have been restored to their correct line following non intentional alteration perhaps due to mapping errors. The exercise for the latter group has been carried out under the 'Rights of Way Improvement Programme', funded by the Welsh Assembly.

The Old Iron Bridge at Draethen has been refurbished and reinstalled by a specialist contractor. It had lasted 180 years before needing repairs and hopefully this version will last at least as long due to damage limitation measures being invoked. The footpath over it has reopened.

The improvement work to the Malpas-Bettws footpath and cycleway is in progress, and the Newport-Caerleon footpath and cycleway has been completed.

Traffic restriction orders have come into force this week for two unclassified lanes in Wentwood Forest. They will run for 6 months and then be reappraised. Hopefully they will deter fly-tippers and off-roaders.

The Local Access Forum has passed a motion to ask WAG to include direct questions about the proximity of PROW's to proposed developers sites on planning application forms. Previously they only had to voice an opinion as to whether routes may be affected, and there have been instances where development has taken place, only for it to be found later that a public footpath has been compromised. Legal bills following such cases can be enormous.

Consultation has started on the proposed rationalisation of the 14 paths at Castle Farm, Penhow, to make for easier route finding, and also to reduce their numbers by 6 or so.

Celtic Manor footpaths have been reopened following their 4 month rest and some clearance work has already been carried out.

5.4. *Rambles Officer* Dave Fereday presented his report:

To say I am looking back on my twelve months in the role of Rambles Officer would not strictly be correct. At the AGM in November 2009 I was approached by Ken whether I would be interested in taking over the role vacated by Christine. I replied by giving a non-committal shrug, hoping Ken would forget he asked me. However I should have realised that Ken doesn't forget and that he interprets a non-committal shrug as a positive response. Consequently, I became the Rambles Officer, although I prefer the title of Walks Coordinator as it sounds more up market, just before Christmas last year.

However, I will reflect on the three walks programmes since last year's AGM. We have walked a total of 580 miles, split as: long walks 410 miles, short walks 104 miles and 66 miles on our evening walks. In addition, we had day trips to Clearwell Caves, Windsor, Lynmouth, Kidderminster and Westonbirt Arboretum, not to mention weekends in Okehampton and Newquay. There were four new leaders, Robin Hillbourne, Rob and Annie Law, Dawn Bishop and Charles Wood. Okay, I appreciate that is five but Rob and Annie lead together. Although all five are long walkers, both Robin, plus Rob and Annie have led shorter walks. In addition, both Judy Cox and Bill George from Pontypool Ramblers have helped out by leading short walks. My thinking was I would lead a long walk when there was a gap; however, there were no gaps so I haven't led a long walk since January.

The new programme, which commences in December, has three new leaders, all leading long walks, but we are still short of volunteers to lead short walks. This was ably illustrated by the summer programme of evening walks. I thought: if there were a couple of gaps I could fill in; however it resulted in either Lorna or myself leading five walks. I appreciate that a lot of people have difficulty in making mid-week evening walks, but that represents Lorna and myself leading almost 40% of the evening walks. Leading an evening walk is of course an ideal stepping stone to leading a Sunday walk.

This fact has to be considered in conjunction with a proposal to be discussed today for the summer programme, scheduled to commence in April. It has been suggested that we offer two walks every Sunday.

That would be a long walk every Sunday and a shorter walk of say 5 to 8 miles every other Sunday, in other words continue as we are now. However, on the alternative Sunday to the short walk it is suggested that we offer a leisurely walk of say 2 to 5 miles. From my own point of view I am not affected, as I will continue to take part in the long walks. Additionally from my own point of view, I think it is a good idea as it means that all members of South Gwent can walk at least once a fortnight. However the success of that venture will be totally dependent on leaders stepping forward for the walks. I must stress that it is my role to coordinate walks not persuade, cajole, coerce or pressurise people into leading.

In finishing, I would like to thank all the willing volunteers who have led walks during the past twelve months. When you enjoy your rest over the festive period, it's an ideal time for poring over a map planning your walk for the summer programme. Additionally, if you would like to lead a walk in the future let me know your e-mail address so you can be added to my list of contacts when I request walks for the next programme.

- 5.4.1. Dave noted that there appeared to be a demand for leisurely walks shorter than the 5-8 mile norm for short walks. He proposed that, from the next walks programme, he seek leaders to provide such extra leisurely walks. He also proposed that the format of Sunday walks be a long walk every week, a short walk every other week and a leisurely walk every other week, with the short walks alternating with the leisurely walks. The meeting agreed that he should try this.

5.5. *Membership Secretary* Val Clark

South Gwent Ramblers Membership											
Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10
194	169	174	177	184	190	186	184	185	184	182	180

Area Membership											
Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sep 10
952	832	835	857	881	891	883	885	884	883	876	881

The RA introduced a new membership database this year. After a lot of teething problems it is now providing a more accurate account of the RA membership. The membership figures only reflect "active" members. These are members whose membership fees have been processed. If the RA are slow in carrying out the processing as they have been in the past, our numbers will vary from month to month.

5.6. *Publicity Secretary* Fred Fee presented his report:

Apart from the usual setting out, printing and distributing programmes and newsletters to members and programmes to a variety of Government bodies and other directories, it's been a quiet year.

Newport and Monmouthshire had walking festivals and I sent details of South Gwent Ramblers and our walks to both. Health & Safety at these events means that leaders have to have some kind of leadership certificates, so offers of leading walks were turned down.

As a means of saving money, the committee asked me to look into sending walks programmes and newsletters as attachments to emails. I was hoping that Ramblers Association head office could help but they had no consistent data on emails: SGR only had two members on email according to their records. So I sent out emails to all known active members asking if they would be willing to receive email attachments. In addition to the committee, only four members responded. This is disappointing.

- 5.6.1. Linda Westerberg asked if programmes and newsletters could be circulated at the AGM. The meeting agreed that we should try this.

- 5.6.2. Dave suggested that publicity for walks could be gained using Newport Matters and notice boards in supermarkets. Fred will look into this.

5.7. *Area Representative* Adrian noted that the Greater Gwent Area are no longer going to produce a newsletter, but will put put Group reports on-line so that Groups can publish on a needs basis.

1. *IT Officer's report* Keith Cooper. Fred met Keith recently and brings this report of the meeting:

Keith Cooper may move to West Wales within the next six months or so. Since all his work on our web site is carried out remotely from his computer, he has said that he is willing to carry on updating the site. The software that Keith uses is no longer being updated. It will probably work for the next two or three years. After that, we will have to publish a new site with different software. If anyone knows a site specialist who could do this, tell Fred, otherwise Fred will have to go despite a lack of expertise at large sites.

2. *Events for 2010/11* Ken

- 2.1. Ken noted that the 28 had already booked for the Christmas Dinner.
- 2.2. The Christmas walk and lunch is booked for Wednesday 29 December at the Hall Inn in Gwehelog. Book with Fred Fee.
- 2.3. Ken has details of the Llandaff Santa walk on 5 December.
- 2.4. Paul Mellor's Festive Surprise walk from his house in Griffithstown will end at the house with a buffet and a view of his indoor Christmas lights (all 6000 of them).
- 2.5. The February trip of Okehampton has so far attracted 12 bookings.
- 2.6. Jan Wagenaar will book skittles for Wednesday 23 March and Wednesday 16 November in the usual venue.
- 2.7. The Scotland trip strenuous walking in June is fully booked but a waiting list is still open. Enquiries to Fred.
- 2.8. Coach trips last year were made in June, July and September. Should we do something to a similar timetable this year. The meeting agreed that we should.
- 2.9. Dave and Ian propose a trip to the Mid-Hants Railway near Winchester (£6 single, £11.50 return). The meeting agreed that it was a good idea. For those who don't walk, Winchester was recommended by Ted Clevely as an interesting day out.
- 2.10. Ken suggested that we could get in touch with the Pembroke Ramblers and ask them to lead a walk for us in their home territory perhaps at Freshwater West, since they had offered to do so when we did the same for them.
- 2.11. Ken asked for any further suggestion for walks to be sent to him before February.
- 2.12. Brian Williams will look into a walk near London near where his son lives. He could put on a 4½-mile walk, visits to the RAF War museum or Runnemedede memorial &c.
- 2.13. Slimbridge was mooted for a visit. Kath Carter mentioned that Berkeley Castle. Ken wondered if a visit to both could be made. A consensus thought that the two would be too much in a day since Slimbridge can provide a full day on its own. Dave suggested that Berkeley Castle could be visited after witnessing a Severn bore. Kath added that Berkeley was itself a pleasant village to visit.
- 2.14. Ted Clevely suggested a visit to the Botanical Gardens at Carmarthen with the coastal path near Llanelli.
- 2.15. Ken repeated his plea for MORE IDEAS.
- 2.16. Charles Woods suggested a coach trip to Church Stretton, which Kath Carter endorsed saying that it was a very pleasant town.
- 2.17. Linda Westerberg suggested a trip to Bosherton.
- 2.18. Also suggested were a trip to the home of the Naked Gardeners at Malmesbury, A 3- or 4-day trip to the Elan Valley Lodge (£300, £230) and a visit to Westonbirt in December for their Festival of Lights.

1. Ken has been doing some homework and suggested a visit to the Isle of Wight from Monday 24 to Friday 28 of October, that is four nights, at the Ocean View Hotel, Sandown Bay where there is an indoor pool, saunas and indoor bowls. The cost is £188 half board. As an alternative, a three-night Friday to Monday stay would be £158. The costs assume 40 people and include coach travel between Newport and one other place and the Hotel as well as use of the coach during our stay. If we could only muster 30 people, there would be a £20 surcharge per person, which the consensus at the meeting found to be worthwhile if the trip proceeded. If you make your own way, the Hotel will pay for the ferry crossings. Dave suggested that we could find something to occupy us on the final day before returning. Ken will find out if it is half term at the times proposed above and move the dates if it is. Sid noted Edwards coaches and Diamonds coaches may do similar trips. Ken will investigate. Peter Elliott suggested that any long walks on such a trip be no more than ten miles so that short walkers were not left waiting. The meeting agreed. Coach trips would be a day out and optional visits.
 2. Dave agreed to try again to have a night of Boules after the last one was rained off. (It did not stop determined Ramblers from staying in the pub, though).
 3. Ken suggested that we could think about returning to Guernsey.
 4. Fred Fee and Peter Elliott offered to run another slide show featuring the countryside and towns of the Black Forest and Belgium, but the meeting was not too keen on the idea.
2. *Election of Officers to the Committee* Jan Wagenaar resigned and the following were elected:
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|--|--|--------------|---------------------|
| <i>Chairman</i> - Ken Phillips | <i>Secretary</i> - Ken Phillips | | |
| <i>Auditor</i> - Alun Booth | <i>Treasurer</i> - Brian Williams | | |
| <i>Rambles Officer</i> - Dave Fereday | <i>IT Officer</i> - Keith Cooper | | |
| <i>Membership Secretary</i> - Val Clark | <i>Footpath Officer</i> - Derek Humble | | |
| <i>Publicity Officer</i> - Fred Fee | <i>Minutes Secretary</i> - Fred Fee | | |
| <i>Area Representatives</i> - Adrian Sheehan, Fred Fee | | | |
| <i>Committee members:</i> | | | |
| Kath Carter | Adrian Sheehan | Brian Turner | Christine Platteeuw |
- 2.1. Kath Carter will *need* volunteers to collect food and carry out catering duties: Kath has a list of the food needed. If there are no volunteers forthcoming, there will be no catering and no barbecue. Ken thanked Kath for all she has done over the years to applause from the meeting.
 - 2.2. Ken reminded the meeting that we need a volunteer to replace Jan.
 - 2.3. Denise Humble thanked Ken for the hard work that he puts in for the Group and the meeting applauded.
3. *AOB*
- 3.1. Joan Lang and Phillis Clayton mentioned a problem at a walk where members had arranged with the leader to go to the start of the walk because it was more convenient than going to the Civic Centre: the members did not make it to the start of the walk and the walk was delayed as a result. Joan and Phyllis asked whether some line of communication should be established in such circumstances, for example by the leader swapping mobile phone numbers with the members, so that the members could warn the leader that they were not arriving. The meeting agreed that this was a good idea.
 - 3.2. Charles wood suggested a “Buddy, Buddy” system whereby experienced leaders take out inexperienced leaders on pre-walks. Adrian said that South Gwent Ramblers always try to do this and offered his services to any prospective leader. Fred said that he would also be willing to do so.
 - 3.3. Paul Mellor reminded us we should check that non-members apply for membership if they wish to walk with us after a trial of three walks.

- 3.4. Brian Williams had attended the Senedd meeting of Ramblers Cymru where he became aware of the "Message in a Bottle" campaign in which people are asked to put a dose of their medication in a bottle in the fridge and put a logo sticker on the fridge so that medics arriving in an emergency would be made aware of their medicinal requirements. He said that Ramblers could put such a bottle in their rucksack and place a sticker or badge on the rucksack to warn medics of its presence. Details can be obtained from www.cardiffbayrotary.org.uk .

South Gwent Ramblers Statement of Accounts 2009/10

Opening Balance		£ 1,025.55
Income	£	
Sale of laser printer	30.00	
Christmas dinner	352.00	
R.A. Holiday advert	40.00	
Allocation from Area	718.00	
Coach Ramble - Windsor	600.00	
Coach Ramble - Lynmouth	450.00	
Coach Ramble - Kidderminster	360.00	
Coach Ramble - Westonbirt	72.00	
Bank interest	<u>01.40</u>	
		£ 2,622.63
Expenditure		
Christmas dinner	352.00	
Coach Ramble - Windsor	600.00	
Coach Ramble - Lynmouth	450.00	
Coach Ramble - Kidderminster	360.00	
R.A. Objectives Access	25.00	
Promote walking	589.21	
Prewalking	<u>284.84</u>	
		<u><u>2661.05</u></u>
Excess of expenditure over income		37.65
Closing balance at 30 September 2010		987.90
B Williams Esq		T A L Booth

Treasurer

Auditor

26 October 2010