

ALTRINCHAM & DISTRICT RAMBLING CLUB

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on November 10th, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Venue All Saints Church Hall, Hale Barns.
Present 54 Members signed the register.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Judy Bailey
Phil and Sue Brownhill
Jean Lewis
Roy Merritt
Maggie Peasegood
Zoe Spark
Keith Wykes

2. Approval of the minutes from the previous Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on November 11th, 2021 were accepted as a correct record of that meeting.

3. Matters Arising

a) Sound System

The Chair, Beverly Harrison (Bha) commented that Liz and David White were currently looking after the sound system in their loft and that this was becoming more onerous for them as each year went by. Bha asked those present if anyone would be prepared to take on the responsibility of storing the sound system on behalf of the club. Jeff Mellor agreed to house the sound system whilst the Committee considered the replacement of the existing system with a smaller and lighter version for use going forward.

b) Leader Training

Bha advised that further to a suggestion made by Keith Wykes at the 2021 Annual General Meeting she was pleased to report that the process of map reading/leader training days had been implemented, with the possibility of further training sessions being organised in 2023.

4. President's Opening Remarks – Heather Wykes (HW)

HW began by thanking everyone for attending the meeting and also gave a big thank you to all the Committee members who continued to do a tremendous job.

HW advised that despite a full programme of walks it has become more difficult to source Members who were willing to lead walks for the Club.

On a more positive note HW went on to highlight the article regarding the Club which had been included in the October issue of Cheshire Life Magazine. Special thanks were given to the Membership Secretary, Monica Beardmore (MB) for communicating with Cheshire Life and to Chris Sadler for providing excellent photographs. A copy of the magazine with the relevant article was available at the meeting for anyone who had not yet had an opportunity to view it.

5. Reports

Chair – Beverly Harrison (BHa)

Those present at the meeting were advised by BHa that:

Since the last AGM the club had been running as normal. However, the club had to keep reminding themselves what the new normal was and some procedures had to be changed.

Four Committee meetings had been held since the last AGM and any matters arising between them had been discussed via. e-mail.

The club holiday in Scarborough had gone ahead and BHa hoped that she was right in saying that a good time was had by all.

The walks organisers and assistants, Phil Worsley, John Capel, Les Stockton and Heather Wykes had sustained a varied walking programme. John had been the Wednesday Organiser for the last 3 years and would be retiring at

the meeting. He took the initiative, along with Dave Bishop, to organise 2 training days, this, it was hoped would be the start of a programme to encourage new leaders to come forward and for existing leaders to improve their skills. It was thought that most members of the committee would be willing to help potential new leaders 'recce' and if existing leaders could find just one more walk it would make the walks organisers jobs so much easier.

This year the club was able to have a New Year's Day Walk, and the President was able to organise a walk and lunch for the first time in the 3 years since she was elected. Further to this the club was looking to renew other traditions such as the Good Friday Chatsworth outing but needed more people to help with both the social and the walking activities.

The coach trips had been re-instated but because of the increase in costs the club have reduced the number of trips to try to insure against loss.

On the financial side the club had had a flirtation with BACS which initially looked like an efficient way of transferring money but proved to have additional costs to the club and so needed to be discouraged.

Since October 2021, Phil Worsley had been putting out the walking programme in addition to being the Webmaster and the Sunday walks organiser. This was clearly an untenable position and one that must be difficult to sustain. When the club originally looked for a replacement several people thought that they would be away too often to take on a regular commitment. However as most of us know unless you are a complete technological dinosaur it would be very difficult to keep out of e-mail and I-phone range. Going on holiday didn't necessarily preclude organising the programme. This was not a job for everyone. It required a degree of self-organisation as well as having grammatical fluency and sufficient computer skills. There is a job description available and there must be someone else besides Phil, in a club this size who could take on the job.

There was one surprising development in that club members were spotted walking near Tatton Park and thanks were again given to Monica Beardmore for the organisation, and Chris Sadler for the photography, when the club was featured in the October issue of Cheshire Life magazine.

BHa thanked all the Committee members for their efforts in keeping the club running but advised that unfortunately, Gill Winn, who started the year enthusiastically as the General Secretary found that she had family issues which meant that she needed to step down from the role, and in addition had suffered an accident on holiday which precluded her from minuting the meeting. Gill was thanked for her efforts and was wished a speedy return back to normal. As a result of the situation Ruth Worsley was thanked for her help in organising the meeting and for taking the minutes, and Phil Worsley was also thanked for sorting out all the additional paperwork required.

BHa concluded by saying that she hoped that she had been able to summarise the main events of the past year and that she had given praise where it was due. The club officers had done their best to keep the club functioning. BHa then thanked Heather Wykes and her team for organising the returning tea and cakes during the interval and apologised if anyone's contribution to the club's activities had been omitted.

BHa then thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and advised that the club could not run without them.

Treasurer – Terry Clarke (TC)

Those present at the meeting were advised by TC that:

They should all be able to see a copy of the club financial statement and that any questions would be taken at the end of the report.

Financially the club had a good year with a surplus of just over £1046, but when the surplus on coach trips and on the club holiday are subtracted, this left an operating surplus of just over £400. A reduced insurance payment and subsequently not paying affiliation to the Ramblers Association, contributed to this last year and this year. When TC became treasurer the subscription was raised from £6 to £8 and subsequently to £10. As basic finances are stable, it is the cost of the monthly circular that has threatened to push the club into deficit in previous years, only being avoided by the surplus on coach trips. The committee had therefore decided that in future, all paper copies of the circular will be posted and a charge of £10 will be made.

The club were now into a new financial year, when membership subscriptions were due, the deadline for payment being the 31st December. TC urged members who did not pay by direct debit, to seriously consider this option, as it made things easier for them, the member not having to remember to pay the subscription, and it also made things easier for the Treasurer, not having to send out reminders, of which fifty were sent out again this year. TC was not suggesting that anyone at the meeting had received one of these, but it would be helpful if members reminded other members, that they met on walks, that the subscription was due. Any member, who wished to pay

their subscription at the meeting and the added cost of the paper circular if applicable, could do so at the end of the meeting.

At this point TC thanked members of the committee for their help in informing him promptly of any payments into the bank account and gave a special thank you to the auditors, John Beardmore assisted by John Jagger, in their diligence in checking the figures, subsequently signing them off as being a true representation of the club's financial position.

Auditor – John Beardmore (JB) assisted by John Jagger (JJ)

The auditor confirmed that the accounts represented a true reflection of the Club's financial position and thanked JJ for his help.

The members present at the meeting adopted the accounts.

Legacies Fund – Beverly Harrison (BHa)

Those present at the meeting were advised that:

The Legacy Committee members were Terry Clarke, Elsie Edwards and Beverly Harrison.

The only expenditure this year had been to replace a damaged gazebo. There will be additional costs for the 3 plaques to the honorary members that died in 2021/22.

General Secretary – Gill Winn (GW)

No report.

Membership Secretary – Monica Beardmore (MB)

Those present at the meeting were advised that:

At the end of the year to September 2022 the club had 213 members compared with 216 at the end of the 2020/21 season, although still slightly down on last year, the rate of decline at least seemed to have steadied.

The club received 21 resignations, most of whom reflected an ageing population of people who had been members for a very long time but who were unfortunately no longer able to walk with the club. Sadly, the club also had 6 deaths during the year and these would be honoured by the Goodwill Secretaries later in the meeting.

The club had welcomed 24 new members in the year compared to 18 in 2020/21, and already one more since the end of September.

The club had received 62 enquiries during the 2021/22 season, the majority of which were the result of general web searches and the Facebook page, again proving how effective our website had become thanks to the Webmaster, Phil Worsley. Some leads had been generated from advertisements placed on a general information web platform called 'Nextdoor' which operated on a very local level. The most successful leads, however, in terms of going forward to become full members were those who joined because of a personal recommendation. Those present were urged to consider who among their contacts might be interested in the club.

During the year the club also had 'business cards' printed, some of which had been placed in suitable places to attract interest. Those present were asked that if they thought that they could usefully distribute some of the cards, that they should speak to MB who would supply some.

MB once again gave, a huge "thank you" goes to the hard working walks organisers and to the much relied upon walk leaders who did such a sterling job, week in, week out providing walks on both Wednesdays and Sundays and commented that without them the club could not continue.

MB then concluded her report by thanking those present for their continued support.

Programme Secretary – Phil Worsley (PW)

Those present at the meeting were advised that:

Since the last AGM the monthly circular had continued to provide the members with all details of club walks and other items of club business, with most of these other items now being placed in a section which followed on from the walks information. This section being labelled as "Other News".

A four page circular, for many years, had been the ideal format for both the printing and distribution processes for the hard copy version, and in addition, the four page format had helped to keep the cost under control. Currently 50 printed versions of the circular per month were being produced – 600 printed copies per year.

As all contributors to the circular, obviously wished to sell their product, whether it was a walk, a social event, or other, the contributor wanted the members to take part in their offering and so they tried to make it attractive whilst at the same time ensuring that the necessary information was there. Due, at times to the number of the other items,

and the length of those and the length of some of the walk submissions, the regular four page format had not been achieved every time and the circular had to go to five pages which then incurred extra printing costs. This was not an issue for the website version which could be any number of pages. For the printed version however, this was an issue. In addition to the extra cost, the production process became time consuming as two versions of the document were sometimes having to be set up, one for the website and one for the hard copy version which went to the printers.

The second phase of the process of getting the hard copy version of the circular to the 50 members that received it continued to run well, and thanks were given to Judy Bailey for her hard and efficient work in that area.

PW closed the report by thanking all walk leaders and contributors of other circular entries for submitting the information generally on time and politely reminded those present that the cut-off date for circular entries was the 10th of the preceding month.

Sunday Walks Organiser – Phil Worsley (PW)

Those present at the meeting were advised that:

Sunday walking had continued to provide the membership nearly always 2, and on occasion 3 options of walks on Sundays during the past year. This being despite the perennial problem of securing leaders for those walks.

A varied programme of walks on Sundays had been provided and that some memorable days out had been experienced. Four walks were cancelled due to the extreme heat, 3 of these being on the same day.

1 further walk had been cancelled as the leader was unwell on the day and 1 walk had been cancelled due to road closures for the Manchester Marathon preventing access to the walk start point, and no local walks took place on the 2 days when the Sunday coach trips took place, as no leaders had come forward.

In terms of Health and Safety on Sunday there had been 1 reported accident in the past 12 months. This being a minor fracture due to a fall on a walk. The incident had been recent and was dealt with admirably at the scene and the injured party was now on the road to recovery.

Over the past year the club overall had continued to review its procedures and had retained various elements that were introduced during the hard times of Covid. The Committee were aware that some of the procedural changes were unpopular, but PW asked those present to bear with the club.

There had been 93 Sunday walks in the past season - 48 "A" walks, 6 "B" walks and 39 "C" walks.

The overall participation in the 93 walks had been 1,402 and that the breakdown of this was:

659 "A" walk participants giving an average of 13.7 per walk

84 "B" walk participants giving an average of 14 per walk

659 "C" walk participants giving an average of 16.9 per walk

The averages compared reasonably well to what they had recently been. There had been no massive increase in the number of participants but there had been no massive decline either and so all things considered, it had been a successful season.

The breakdown of the Sunday walk leaders had been:

48 "A" walks had 17 leaders

6 "B" walks had 3 leaders

39 "C" walks had 19 leaders

Once again PW had to report that too much was being done by too few and that this looked likely to continue during the next season and the fact was that the Club did not have enough leaders and there was no quick fix for this and advised that the ones carrying the burden of the extra workload would not go on doing this forever. The extra workload would become too much for them.

A closer look at the numbers revealed that, at the time of writing the report the Club had 215 Members, and of those 215, 66 had not, for one reason or another, walked at all in the past year and 13 had only walked the once. So, the Club actually had 79 people who were unlikely to make a contribution in the area of walk leading, almost 37%. Going forward, PW and HW would continue to work hard to try and secure a full programme of Sunday walks for the members but the reality was that unless things improved in this area there could well be gaps in next seasons' walking programme. PW asked those present to help the Club by offering to lead walks and advised that if help was required with this then it would be made available.

Looking ahead to the coming Sunday Walking season PW reported that 31 Sunday walks were already in place and leaders for these walks were secured. The aim would again be to offer a full and varied walking programme, but this would be leader dependant.

PW closed the report with various thank you messages on behalf of himself and the Committee:

To Heather Wykes who had once again worked extremely hard in securing walks and leaders for the Sunday shorter walks.

To the members and guests who had made up the overall attendance figure of 1,402 and who had actively supported the hard working leaders by participating in the organised Sunday walks.

To those who had given PW help, constructive advice and, on occasion, constructive criticism during the past year.

To all the leaders/leader groups of the 93 Sunday walks which had taken place in the season, and reminded those present that without those leaders, the club would not be out walking in the countryside on Sundays, and asked those existing leaders to once again, continue with their good work in the coming season and asked those that had not yet led a walk for the club to please consider it going forward.

Wednesday Walks Organiser – John Capel (JC)

Those present at the meeting were advised that:

Thankfully there had been a full year of walking, with no serious Covid interruptions. Some Covid processes had been retained, for example, the booking system and car sharing.

JC thanked Les Stockton and John Beardmore for organising their respective programmes during the year, which across the Wednesday programme, had been very successful, with a total of 99 walks undertaken by 1,524 walkers, which was higher than in recent years.

The breakdown of the last years walks, up to the time of drafting, was:

46 Longer 'A' walks (>9.5 miles) – supported by 486 walkers (average 10.6)

14 Inter 'B' walks (6.5 - 9 miles) – supported by 230 walkers (average 16.4)

39 Shorter 'C' walks (<6.5 miles) – supported by 808 walkers (average 20.7)

Over the year and compared with the 2020/21, average 'A' walk participation had reduced by c15%, 'B' walks had increased by c50% and 'C' walks were slightly up by 3%. There had been one known 'reportable' H&S issue during the year.

Thanks were also given by JC to:

All the walk leaders, for their planning, reconnoitring and leading. At this point those present were reminded that without those leaders there would be no walking. The key leaders were given special thanks and those were; Alan Key 9 'A' walks, John Beardmore 7 'B' walks and Brian & David Warburton 9 'C' walks.

All the walk leaders on the 2 Wednesday coach trips to Sedbergh and Coniston.

The 2022 Christmas lunch organisers and Alan Key who hopefully would get to actually lead the walk in 2022, after the heavy rain that had stopped the 2021 variant taking place.

Following the success of the 2021 'A' group's charity walk afternoon, as part of the Cracken Edge walk in August, it was repeated in 2022 and had proved to be more successful. A proposal had been floated to coordinate with a 'B'/'C' walk on the same day during 2023.

Probably ever since the club was set up, there had been a call for new leaders. This last year had proved to be no different, with a reducing number of leaders carrying a larger burden, to ensure there is a walk on each week. This was also the case on the coach trips. So, in October this year, 2 walk leadership training days were set up and over 40 members attended. The training was conducted by ADRC member David Bishop, and for those who didn't know, it was advised that David was a very experienced and qualified outdoor leader. Both training sessions proved to be a great success and the club were now looking at the feedback that had been received, with a view to determining how to build on what had been achieved so far.

JC advised that, on a personal note, sadly the club lost Susie Sutton Pratt during the year, and that Susie had been a stalwart of both Wednesday and Sunday walks, was loved by all her walking friends and was greatly missed.

As this was JC's last club meeting, he again thanked all walk organisers who had been very supportive and the Wednesday walk leaders that had led some cracking walks.

Coach Trip Organiser – Jill Jagger (JJa)

Those present at the meeting were advised by JJa that:

Thanks were due to Beverly Harrison, Beryl Hunwick, Jenny Rydell, and Pauline Glover, who made up the Coach Trip Committee, for their organisational skills.

The Coach trip Committee had tried to steer a middle course after Covid.

Four successful coach trips had taken place in the year, these being to Sedbergh (the fish and chips were good at the end of the walk!), Pateley Bridge, Coniston, and Betws-y-Coed.

Finglands had provided the coaches and ADRC had charged £20 per person, which included the driver's tip. They were contracted to supply 53-seater coaches but had in some instances supplied a 57-seater at no extra cost. There had been an average of 51 people on each coach, and 6 free places on each trip had been provided for the walk leaders.

The coach trips had made a surplus of £583 for the club funds and this was anticipated to be needed to subsidise the cost of coaches and fuel increases in 2023.

At this point JJa asked for more coach trip walk leaders for the 2023 season.

The proposed 4 destinations for walking trips in 2023 were given, these being:

Porthmadog (May), Ambleside (June), Howarth (July) and Ilkley (September).

It was proposed to have a social coach trip to Harrogate in August, this providing a spread of one coach trip per month from May to September.

Quotes for the cost of these 5 coaches for next year were being sourced.

The average charge for the coaches in 2022 was £775 per trip. It was anticipated that the cost will have increased by at least £100 in 2023.

Holiday Organiser – Beryl Hunwick (BHu)

Those present at the meeting were advised by BHu that:

After the disruptions of Covid the club holiday to Scarborough had been a success and that everyone on the trip had enjoyed themselves.

The plans for the 2023 holiday to Porthcawl were underway and it was hoped that this would be another successful trip with good walking and good company.

Social Organiser – Heather Wykes (HW)

HW thanked everyone who had helped and supported the social events during the year and announced that future events included a Valentine's Day walk followed by brunch at Styal Golf Club. HW hoped that the event would be well attended and that it was an opportunity for members to spend time together.

Goodwill Secretaries – Jeanne Gregory (JG) and Lesley Short (LSH)

JG announced that during the year 12 get well cards, 1 wedding anniversary card and 6 "milestone" birthday cards had been sent to members.

LSH advised of those members/ former members of the club that had passed away in the previous 12 months and that these were:

Mary Collister

Susie Sutton-Pratt

Dorothy Stellfox

Alan Wetters (former member)

Barry Rice (honorary member)

Joan Holmes (honorary member)

Eric Stuffins (honorary member)

A minute's silence was then held to remember those who had died.

Webmaster – Phil Worsley (PW)

Those present at the meeting were advised by PW that:

The Club website and the associated social media page via Facebook, continued to run well and attract interest. The website accounted for almost all the membership enquiries and the Facebook page continued to encourage people to investigate the club further.

The Facebook page was “liked by” 545 people and was “followed” by 587.

There had been no “major” issues but a few “minor” ones with some of the Members who used the website. Members were helped where possible but it was stressed that a full I.T. help desk facility was not available.

The password for access to the “Members Area” of the website would change at the close of business on January 31st, and that the new membership card for the coming season would have both the username and the new password printed on it. Notes would appear in both the December and January circulars reminding members of the upcoming change to the password. Members were advised not to attempt to use the new password prior to February 1st as they would be denied access.

With regard to the “Current Gallery” photographs PW thanked Chris Sadler and Les Stockton who were the main contributors of photographs from the longer and shorter walks respectively.

Reference had been made by some members regarding the number of TBA entries that appeared in the Forward Walks Programme and PW explained to those present that he had advised the Committee that a TBA entry was better than no entry at all in that the club had a leader committed to leading a walk on a given date, and that as soon as he was made aware of changes he updated the programme. For this he was of reliant on the Leaders or the walks organisers forwarding him the information when walk areas and mileages had been determined.

The on-line walk submission form had been tweaked in 2021 and continued to perform well and PW thanked Judy Bailey who was helping those who still did not use the form when submitting their walks.

PW closed the report by asking those present to continue using the club website and for those that didn't use it to please have a look, for it was there that they would find considerable information about the club and the club's activities, and, if members could use it to download the monthly circular instead of having it posted, at extra cost to the member then perhaps they should do so.

Health & Safety Officer – Beverly Harrison (BHa)

Those present at the meeting were advised by BHa that:

Two members had recently had falls that resulted in fractures. One being on 7th September and one on 30th October. On both occasions the falls occurred on difficult terrain that required complete concentration with the conditions on the 30th October being made worse by heavy rain. Both ladies involved hoped to return to walking ASAP.

6. Election of Officers

Bha announced the following nominations for officers due for re-election or for vacant positions:

Heather Wykes – President (re-election)

Zoe Spark – Vice President (re-election)

Aptar Sandhu -Taylor – General Secretary (vacant position)

Jill Weir – Wednesday Walks Organiser (vacant position)

All of the nominations were agreed by those present at the meeting and the nominees were duly appointed.

At this point BHa asked those present that if anyone was interested in the position of Programme Secretary, or if they knew of anyone that was, that they should contact any member of the Committee.

Interval – 8:45 to 9:15

7. Donations

TC proposed that a donation of £75.00 be made to each the following organisations:

The Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Organisation

The Peak District Mountain Rescue Team

The Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation

The Rossendale and Pendle Mountain Rescue Organisation

The Oldham Mountain Rescue Team

The Buxton Mountain Rescue Team

The Peak and Northern Footpath Society

This was agreed by those present at the meeting.

8. Honorary Membership

BHa advised that the Committee had determined that no Honorary Memberships would be given in 2022 but that consideration of potential members would take place in 2023.

9. Any Other Business

Provision of Lifts

Jenny Rydell raised the issue regarding the difficulty of members getting a lift to the start point of a walk. BHa suggested that anyone who needs a lift could contact the relevant walk leader who in turn may be able to suggest who could help. Les Stockton commented that some of the "C" walkers are willing to give lifts and suggested that a list of those people would be helpful. Janet Blinkhorn supported the idea of a list, which would then remove the burden from the leaders. Monica Beardmore asked if the list could be made available on the Club website and Phil Worsley, as Webmaster, advised that yes this could be done if a list was provided.

Memorials

June Watling asked about the possibility of organising something in memory of her late husband John. BHa advised that this could be looked into.

The meeting closed at 9:25.

Date of the next Annual General Meeting.

The next Annual General Meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, 9th November, 2023 at All Saints Church Hall, Hale Barns.

ADRC January 2023.