

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION
GEDLING & DUKERIES GROUP ON SUNDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2014
AT 1400 IN LAMBLEY VILLAGE HALL

<u>PRESENT:</u> Jonathan Ankers	Mick Rawdin	Malcolm Costello
Carolyn Broadhurst	Robert Livermore	Pat Rogers
Alan Johnston	Pat Shaw	Alec Kingsmill
Peter Dawson	Marian Kingsmill	Barbara Shillito
Val Disney	Brian Torr	June Goddard
Pat Hilliard	Colleen Pilgrim	Derek Baker
Polly Johnson	Ann Staples	Chris Large
Graham Dicker	Jim Norris	Liz Pritchett
Alex McGowan	Rob Musson	Bob Rotheram
Marlene Smalley	Heather Darwent	John Crofts
Antony Underwood	Diane Smith	Paul Geeson
Alan Wilson	Carol Hill	Sue Grant
Aubrey Gamble	Dorothy Marshall	John Marshall

1 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from: Gay Wood, Elizabeth Fairhurst, Graham Ware, Jenny Fillingham, Nick Hill, Carolyn Broadhurst and Nicky Fraser.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 3rd November 2013 were available to read.

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were passed as a true record.

Proposed: Pat Rogers

Seconded: Val Disney

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Notts Walker was issued before the Christmas fuddle. 130 out of 200 had been handed out.

Bob Rotheram suggested the paper walks programme was outdated and that it put off potential walks leaders, being published so far in advance. He favoured a rolling programme. Some thought it was discriminating against those not on the internet and, even if they were, not all had a printer. The secretary said that e-mail addresses were requested a year ago but only half a dozen people had replied.

Six months of walks were required to avoid late insertions becoming the default. There was a debate on the issue raised by Polly Johnson regarding having a rolling two monthly programme. Bob Rotheram also suggested that we should consider this issue as this method was used by the U3A branch to which he belonged. Pat Rogers said that HF sent out their walks every two months. **It was agreed** to take back to committee.

5 ANNUAL REPORTS

5.1 Chairman

Once again I start with a personal thank you to all the members of the committee who have given their time to the successful running of the group over the past 12 months. It is important to have a fully functional committee to run the group and to have all of the positions covered. One of the highlights of the year was the 25th anniversary of the Gedling Group. The Sunday chosen for the event turned out to be sunny and the two walks were well attended. The fuddle afterwards provided a fine choice of food.

Another thank you is to members of the group who are still willing to lead walks. Without these members we as a group would not operate as a walking group. The walks provided in the group's two walks programmes printed each year reflect an excellent choice of walks for all abilities.

There still remains competition from other organisations for membership (this is a national problem -not just to our group) but over the past year , the group's membership appears to have stabilised but we must not be complacent. Recently an advert for the group was placed in the NG3 magazine for the September / October 2014 issue .Depending on the feedback received – the advert may be then placed in either the NG4 or NG5 magazine in Spring 2015.

Finally, a thank you to everyone who is a member of the group for the support of your membership -all your membership fees help to support the aims and objectives of the Ramblers.

The AGM is the chance for members to air their views -please take this opportunity to put your opinion over at the meeting .The Notts. Walker would again be sent out by the time of the Christmas fuddle.

5.2 Treasurer

The current balance was £737 against £1366 last year due to the cut in central funding. Head Office had been told that we need £500 to operate otherwise funds could run out by the end of 2015. Copies of the accounts were available.

5.3 Footpaths

We have been involved in several footpath problems:

Gedling Country Park. We have not made real progress with Gedling Borough Council. The Council has been "tunnel-visioned" and have disregarded the help of the Steering Committee to such a degree that some have now walked away from the project.

White Hart Public House, Mansfield Road. This site has been used for a Lidl superstore. There was a footpath from Mansfield Road to Maidens Dale, which was not a definitive right of way. We take the view that a public right of way might exist but is not recorded. We met with the Planning Officer. Although planning permission had been granted, there was a footway via the car park that would suffice.

In general, most footpaths are walkable; some overgrown and cleared by our members whilst reconnoitring their club walks. Lots of brambles and nettles were apparent. A good year for growth! I have reported footpath problems at the Tuesday night meetings at Bilsthorpe, however there are man-power problems within the local boroughs through cut-backs and lack of funding. Walks leaders had been asked to report problems when walks were researched. John Croft said that he reported problems to the County Council, who responded well.

5.4 Membership

Membership for the group at 31st August 2014 was 264. This is down by 5 for the same period last year, when the number was 269.

2013/14

20 new members - 5 which have transferred in from another group

2 members reinstated, 38 members no longer in the group. 33 notified Central Office of which 26 resigned and 7 moved away. 5 memberships lapsed.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS ATTACHED TO THE GROUP

31st August 2014

Total	264
Annual Individual	104
Annual Individual Concession	32
Annual Joint	69
Annual Joint Concession	52
Life Individual	1
Life Individual Concession	4
Life Joint Concession	2
Payments Pending	5
Members no longer in the group	1
New Members	2
Members Reinstated	0

Membership rates increased from 1st May 2014 as follows

Individual Annual	£33.00
Individual Monthly	£3.00
Joint Annual	£44.00
Joint Monthly	£4.00
Individual Concession Annual*	£20.00
Individual Concession Monthly*	£2.00
Joint Concession Annual*	£26.50
Joint Concession Monthly*	£2.60

These rates are valid until 30th April 2015

*Concessionary rates are available for people on means tested benefits, people solely reliant on state pension or full time students. Membership renewal payments can be made on line as well as by annual cheque, postal order and direct debit. Monthly direct debit is now available to current members; previously only available to new members.

The Ramblers no longer offer a £10.00 discount on individual or joint membership for the first year of joining, even if the member pays by Direct Debit.

5.5 Area

The role of the Liaison Officer is to ensure that the views and interests of Gedling and Dukeries are taken into account in the Area Council deliberations. At the same time members of the Local Group need to be informed of key issues in the higher realms of the Ramblers Association.

The Area Council keeps an overview on Rights of Way throughout Nottinghamshire liaising closely with Council Rights of Way Departments. However during the course of the last year there has been a severe cutback in the staffing of Rights of Way Departments. The County Council has actually abolished it's Rights of Way Department and split their portfolio between other Departments. The Area Council has approached senior Council

Officers to express our concerns. But as things stand, it appears that there is a growing failure to carry out statutory responsibilities to maintain footpaths. There are concerns about the meeting of the 2024 target to identify Rights of Way.

During the course of the year we have been moving away from the previous Committee paper based approach to dealing with Rights of Way to one in which Rights of way amendments and proposals are received electronically through "District Rights of Way Co-Ordinators" who liaise with Local Groups. Gedling and Dukeries Group is included in a District along with Broxtowe and Nottingham City. In practice we have not yet got to the point of actually abolishing the Committees.

In addition to Rights of Way, representatives of the Area Council are in regular communication with planning bodies about all aspects of planning applications which might affect the countryside. Ramblers living in Gedling may be interested in changes to the "Aligned Core Strategies" which implement the Coalition Government's policy of freeing up the planning process to support growth. In particular the strategy now states that "the relevant Council will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved". It is no longer necessary for planners to adopt the "precautionary principle" when building on flood plains. Also, planners no longer have to "robustly justify" why complying with policy requirements is not viable or feasible.

In the case of HS2 we made a submission to HS2 Ltd as part of the consultation process in which we laid down our proposals for protecting all the rights of way which would be affected in Nottinghamshire.

The Area Council has also taken a keen interest in other Gedling and Dukeries issues such as Gedling Country Park, the Dorket Head Trig Point and the new Dorket Head brick clay quarry

A subject which is appearing on the horizon is fracking. The Nottinghamshire Mineral Extraction Plan broadly endorses the development of fracking and several Companies already hold exploration licences. The Area Council is developing an approach which is based on the principle of minimising the damage to the countryside in general and rights of way in particular.

If members have any issue they wish raised directly with the Area Council they are more than welcome to contact me at any time. Incidentally, I am also the Area Countryside Officer for Nottinghamshire so am more than happy about taking up issues relating to more general Planning or Countryside issues. The Ramblers Association is very large and hierarchical. The area rep. is always available to take up issues for members.

5.6 Coach

Firstly, I would like to thank Mick Rawdin for all his support this year.. He lead the Pickering walk when the leader became ill. He also organized the Pateley Bridge walk and day out. Both trips were full and a good time was had by all. I think we can give him some time of in 2015!

Val Disney has come forward with a trip in July, when we will go the Stow on the Wold, Bourton on the Water. Polly Johnson is looking at a second trip. These will be in the March to August 2015 programme. Many thanks to both of them.

Anyone who has a favourite holiday walk is encouraged to submit it as a coach trip. Please contact me. Church Stretton on 17th May, £12, is being run by Polly and George. 19th July is Stow on the Water to Bourton on the Water.

1.1 **Web**

During the last year two new features were added to the web site. Firstly the Walks Map was modified so that clicking anywhere on the map pops up the grid reference of the point clicked on. Secondly, the site provides a downloadable Garmin format SatNav file containing the starting location of all the walks.

Some experiments were also made with automatically converting the Map References to Postcodes (because SatNavs need Postcodes, not Map Refs) but this was not so successful and won't be proceeded with.

Although I have no firm figures for the number of new members who have been prompted to join us after finding us via the web site, I know from speaking to people on walks that several have been come to us via the web site. Graham offered a demonstration to anybody interested.

1.2 **Maps**

No maps were out at the time. The maps are little used and mostly out of date, although useable. This post, along with the maps, was now redundant as all the information can be obtained from the internet and all the maps had been donated by members. Up to date maps covering the entire country were available from Nottingham library.

1.3 **Social**

Since our last AGM the Group have enjoyed quite a few events. In December we had our Christmas walk and fuddle. Thanks to Dorothy and John. We had an excellent raffle; the proceeds helping pay for the hire of the hall. A collection was also made and sent to MIND. Fifty Thursday walkers enjoyed a walk followed by a very nice Christmas lunch at the Treetops.

At the end of January, our oldest member, George Orgill, was 100 years old. A good turn out of members helped him celebrate his special day with a fuddle and entertainment at the Westdale Community Centre.

In April it was 25 years since the Gedling Group was formed. Two walks were followed by a fuddle and raffle to celebrate.

Our annual dinner this year was moved from February to May. This went very well and we all enjoyed lovely views over Ramsdale Golf Course while we ate our meal.

Raffles were organized for both bus trips. Ramsdale Golf Club would host the annual dinner on 2nd May. Tickets £13.95.

1.4 **Publicity**

There had been a new idea to produce laminated posters. Kath Ford reported difficulty finding details in libraries. It was suggested that the libraries would not take laminated posters.

1.5 **Walks Programme**

I am pleased to report that both March to August 2014 and the September 2014 to February 2015 walks programme were produced without any problems. All the walks coordinators submit their respective walks to me on time and I was able to produce the programme well in advance of the first walks in the programme. For the March-August edition we had 15 A walks, 22 B walks, 17 Wednesday walks, 20 Thursday walks, 9 Saturday walks, 1 Special 25th Anniversary walk and 2 coach trips. For the September-February edition we had 14 A walks, 21 B walks, 25 Thursday walks and 3 Saturday walks. This is a similar amount to previous years. There is still scope of additional walks as not all the slots in the programme are filled and any submissions by new walks leader

would greatly help keep the group active and thriving. Paperwork had not been received for 11 out of the 27 walks and there were still five spaces.

The chairman thanked all those working on the committee

2 ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE

The chairman thanked Christine Large for her work as Publicity Officer. The post would be vacant, as would Countryside Officer. The remainder of the existing committee were re-elected unanimously. Nominated and duly elected were: Brian Torr, Graham Dicker, Peter Dawson, George Wood, Jim Norris, Mick Rawdin, Jonathan Ankers, Brian O'Neill, Val Disney, Pat Rogers, Ann Staples, Graham Dicker Alex McGowan and Liz Pritchett. The first meeting would be on 8th January 2015.

3 CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS

There were no motions proposed.

4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cath asked whether commission was received from HF Holidays. The treasurer said that no statement had been received since June. The money always took a couple of months to arrive.

There being no other business the meeting closed at **1525**.