



## South East Berks Ramblers

### 32nd Annual General Meeting

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 4.45pm – The Seeby Hall,

St. Michael's Pastoral Centre, Lower Church Road, Sandhurst, GU47 8HN

**Present:** 36 members including the committee

#### 1. The Chairman's welcome

Shirley Poulton welcomed everyone and apologised that the pre-meeting walk had been abandoned due to the weather.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

Received from: Dave, Helen & Richard Hooker; Anthea & Andrew Johnson; Don & Nella Burnside; Maz Down; Ed & Helen Burridge; Janet & Tony Russell; Diane Collins; Barbara Denyer; Pauline Fothergill; Judy Maclenahan.

#### 3. Approval of previous minutes and matters arising

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and there were no matters arising. Proposed by Alan Hoskins and seconded by Denise Jones.

#### 4. Chairman's Report - Shirley Poulton

The Chairman's report is attached in Appendix 1. There was a clarification on the number of gates funded by the group: 3 in 2018 and 5 in the financial year from the beginning of October 2017.

#### 5. Treasurer's Report - Steve Wells

Steve Wells circulated to members a copy of the treasurer's report and accounts 2017-18 – report attached in Appendix 1.

There was a discussion about the encouragement to make payments online in light of the new bank charges for processing cash and cheques. Barry Leach highlighted that some people prefer not to use online banking because of security concerns. To maintain inclusivity, SEBR will continue to accept cash and cheques without adding a surcharge.

There was a discussion about the changed process for funding of gates to be installed by Bracknell Forest Rangers. The meeting strongly supported SEBR's longstanding partnership with the Council to improve accessibility of paths in the borough, for example by replacement of stiles with gates.

The examiner Mr Dennis Wilkinson has approved the accounts.



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Approval of financial report proposed by Kate Wratten and seconded by Brian Poulton.

#### 6. General Reports

Membership – Colin Bird

The Membership Secretary's report is attached in Appendix 1. There were no questions.

Walks Programme – David Hunt

The only point to add to the Chairman's comments on the walks programme was that we continue to lack a coordinator for Sunday Short Walks which has resulted in short-notice additions to and some gaps in the programme.

Website – Douglas Buchanan

The Webmaster's report is attached in Appendix 1. There were no questions

Social Events – Douglas Buchanan

The Social Events report is attached in Appendix 1.

The meeting applauded Douglas for his much-appreciated efforts and hard work organising the social events.

Publicity - Brian Poulton

The Publicity Officer's report is attached in Appendix 1.

There was a question about whether there had been any publicity on Radio Berkshire in the last year. Brian said that he had participated in at least one interview.

Countryside – Richard Mosses

The Countryside Officer's report is attached in the Appendix. There were no questions

Footpaths – Mike Abbott

Mike Abbott reported that he and 2 other committee members continue to participate in Bracknell Forest's Local Countryside Access Forum which enables input and discussions about rights of way within the borough.

He reported on 2 footpath issues:

- Winkfield Footpath 10 – David Fisher had notified him that it was partially blocked by a pile of horse manure pushing over the fence – reported to Bracknell Forest Council



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- An issue with a path at Boveney Court Farm notified by Brian Poulton – reported to Windsor and Maidenhead Council.

### Sunday Long Walks

Barry Leach encouraged members to try the longer walks on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month. He aims to have one approx. 10 mile walk each month to attract those who are looking for something a little longer – he noted that adjacent Ramblers groups have few walks of this length.

Barry highlighted that the Sunday Long Walks are set on the programme through to January which illustrated the advantage of having a coordinator for these walks.

### **7. Election of Officers and Committee**

The Chairman suggested that the officers and committee willing to stand again could be re-elected en-masse as there had been no nominations received contesting any of these positions. Proposed by Barry Leach, seconded by David Fisher. Approved by the meeting.

The Committee and Officers for 2018/19 will be:

Chairman - Shirley Poulton  
Treasurer - Steve Wells  
Secretary & Membership Secretary – Colin Bird  
Publicity Officer- Brian Poulton  
Walks Programme Editor - David Hunt  
Countryside Secretary & Area Representative - Richard Mosses  
Webmaster & Social Events Organiser - Douglas Buchanan  
Footpath Secretary – Mike Abbott  
Committee Member - Andy Young  
General Committee Members – 1 vacancy

Non-Committee Members:

Sunday Long Walks co-ordinator - Barry Leach  
Sunday Short Walks co-ordinator - Vacant  
Wednesday Walks co-ordinator - Vacant  
Holidays Organiser - Vacant

### **8. Election of Honorary Examiner of Accounts**

Kate Wratten was nominated by Steve Wells, seconded by David Fisher and approved unanimously.

### **9. Any Other Business**



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- Motion Proposed by Kate Wratten: To affiliate to HF Holidays with an investment of 100 x £1 shares funded by the £100 early booking discount on April 2019 holiday (proposal attached as Appendix 2). The motion was approved by the meeting. (Subsequent to the meeting it was agreed that Kate Wratten would be the SEBR contact for HF Holidays).
- Janet Norris asked suggested that varying the location of the AGM could attract more members. The committee had discussed this issue after it was raised at the last AGM and decided to keep using St Michael's because of the relatively low cost and established relations with the hall management. The Chairman agreed that the committee would discuss the suggestion again.

The Meeting ended at 6.00pm.



**Appendix 1**

**Committee Reports**

**Chairman's Report - Shirley Poulton**

We have had another very successful year with a very varied Walks Programme. I would like to mention 5 new Walk Leaders:

- Ed Burridge – Wednesday & Sunday
- Marian & Dave Blackmore - Wednesday
- Wendy Andrews (Sundays)
- Maggie Hills (Sundays)

Jackie Hobbs, David Fisher and Mike Abbott all continue with their Tuesday walks and there are Sundays, both long and short. Barry Leach is going to report on the Sunday walks. There is also a weekly Saturday morning walk and Brian Poulton will report on this.

Cecil Chapel, who some of you know, still leads walks for us. Cecil was Chairman of this group for some 14 years and is now in his 80's. He takes the short Wednesday walk as we now have several people who cannot manage the 5/6 miles that the rest of the group do. Well done Cecil.

Wednesday walks continue to attract a large number of walkers and I am pretty sure its success is partly due to the lunch and social gathering in the pub at the end of the walk.

It never fails to amaze me how Walk Leaders come up with such diverse walks both in terms of how far we have to travel and the very different scenery each location has to offer. I applaud them all because without you we would not have such a great walks programme.

In order to say a "thank you" to all Walk Leaders we organised a BBQ in July at the Palmer Arms, Dorney and the pub did us proud. There were some 41 leaders and guests.

We continue to work closely with Rob Solomon, the Ranger at Bracknell Council with regard to the replacement/repair of stiles/gates etc. We have only managed the installation of 3 gates this year at a cost of £542. Rob has asked for some further funding which we have not, as yet, managed to hand over. Steve Wells will explain the reasons for this in his report.

Our September coach trip this year was arranged in order that we were able to invite non-walkers to join us as the coach stayed with us all the time. Sadly, after much publicity and encouragement, the event did not attract any non-walkers. The Tea Party is another good example of the inclusion of non-walkers to join in too.

I continue to hold Committee Meetings at my home thereby saving the cost of hall hire and I only call meetings when there is something urgent or necessary to discuss round the table so to speak. I



find that email can work perfectly too. Doug, Brian and I often meet up throughout the year to discuss our social events programme.

Our Annual lunches are coming up early 2019 at the Crown & Cushion, Minley. The dates are Wednesday 20th and Sunday 24th February. You will be kept informed of these lunch dates in your Newsletters and you will be able to order your lunch on line as we have done in previous years. There will be a walk on both days before lunch.

I continue to submit my "ramblings" to our website and hope that you occasionally take a look at that.

It just leaves me to say a big "thank you" to a brilliant Committee for their dedication, support and hard work. It's been a pleasure to work with you.

**Treasurers report – Steve Wells**

**Main Account – Ramblers Association Activities**

We have continued our policy of reducing our "Ramblers" Reserves, which once stood at several thousand pounds, by requesting less grant from Ramblers than our planned expenditures. We received £594.20 in grant but spent £1,064.91, including £912 on footpaths in Bracknell Forest area. However, our Ramblers Reserves only reduced by a further £44.26 because £420 was received from Ramblers Holidays. Our reserves stand at 68.9% of our annual Ramblers turnover – which is well within the band required by the Ramblers Association.

Our "Main" reserves now stand at £734.01.

**Self-funded Account**

The Self-funded fund is our money which is the profit we make on all our social activities so well organised by Doug!

On a turnover of over £5000, we made £325.78 profit before treating our walk leaders to a free BBQ (£550).

Our Self-funded fund now stands at £1,041.90.

**2018/19**

In 2018/19 we will only receive £404 of central funding. Any project funding must be requested from Berkshire Area as they arise during the year. It is funded from the profit East Berks makes on its publications. We have received a request from Bracknell Forest Rangers for footpath improvements in the Winkfield area of about £700 for gates and a bridge and a grant request is in preparation.



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### Bank Charges

From September 5th 2018, we will be paying bank charges for depositing cash and cheques but not for online receipts. For each cheque deposited we will be charged 30p and for cash we will be charged 50p per £100.

Using 2017/18 accounts as a base, 151 payments (75%) received from members were paid online and would be free. The remaining 57 receipts of cash and cheques would incur a cost of £15 – £20 per year. Ramblers HQ suggest that we ask “cheque payers” to pay and additional 30p and cash payers an extra 15p per £100 to cover the costs.

You are encouraged to make all of your payments online!

### Membership report – Colin Bird

- SEBR membership numbers have declined by about 5% (17) since the last AGM. This follows a period of about 5 years of stability
  - October 2017 313
  - October 2018 296
  - New members 21 (30 previous year)
  - Turnover ~10%
  - Berkshire Area membership shows general downward trend
- Communication with the members is primarily by email and the web-site.
  - We have email addresses for almost 90 % of the membership (including at least 1 email address for joint members)
  - Those for whom we don't have an email address do not appear to be active members of the group (not known to committee members) – they only receive the notice for the AGM by post.
  - If you do not receive emails for the group, please let us know.
- General Data Protection Regulations
  - Ramblers head office issued guidance on these new regulations about a month before the implementation date in May.
  - As written they would have meant we would have been able to send emails about the group's activities to fewer than 50% of the group's membership. Their preferred approach is that we should only use email addresses on the head office database for people who have opted into receiving emails.
  - At a meeting organised by the Area with Ramblers Data Protection Officer it became apparent that the primary concern was inclusion of advertising/marketing in group newsletters.
  - The committee agreed that we should continue to use email addresses from both the head office and our local list for communication of the Group's activities – unless anyone has specifically notified us that they want to opt out. All our Group emails include details of how to opt out.

### Website Report – Douglas Buchanan – Web Manager



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It is always pleasing when one receives messages from ramblers from other groups who are impressed with our website. It does make it worthwhile to maintain it. The business side of the website is the Walks Programme page and I am indebted to Brian Jones for all the work he does to maintain it and adds extra facilities for ramblers to use. I am talking about the buttons directed to your electronic diary on your smart phone or your electronic tablet. Click on the walk and all the details are sent directly to the calendar. One does not appreciate how much work is done to produce such an effective page.

Each month we continue to get an average of 900 unique visitors with a monthly average of over 2200 visits.

### Social Report – Douglas Buchanan – Social Secretary

This report is very similar to a broken record so my apologies if you think you have heard it before!

Shepherds House was our location for the annual lunches and support, as usual, was very good. Sadly, the pub did not keep all its promises but we still had two enjoyable “get togethers”. Thanks to the Poultons for organise the event.

I located a mobile skittle alley belonging to the Owlsmoor 1st Scouts Group which they generously lent us for a successful and competitive evening here in the Pastoral Centre. Pizzas and salads were served and through the generosity of those present and the contribution to the raffle we donated £175 to the scout group.

The quiz evening in May brought the brains of Britain together in one room and the scoring was nip and tuck until the last round. The support was very good with new members attending and several friends were part of the teams.

Chidham Peninsula is described as one of the beautiful areas in the country but be warned of the high tide because it may cut off your path. All looked good for the first date chosen but on the day of our visit the tide was at its highest at 11:45. Well, we reached the beach path at 11:40 – oh dear! There was a lot of scrambling, a lot of advice but we did get through the ordeal reasonably well except for a head wound. Yes, the scenery was attractive especially with the bird life around and the sailing boats in the water. The Bosham provided good meals but again they did not keep to all its promises.

The road train was the form of transport on our Hingstbury Head visit. Brian and Shirley (Poulton) who organised the September trip try and introduce a different form of transport on these away days. The day went like clockwork and it was interesting to see the overvalued beach huts. The Riverside Pub was exceptional providing excellent food and the delivery of the food was so organised we were all eating within fifteen minutes after the first dish was served.



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We use D & P coaches for our outings and their customer service is outstanding starting with the booking office and then we find the coach drivers co-operative and accommodating with our requests on the day.

Do you want a change? If you can think of other activities or functions we could be doing do let me know. A suggestion does not mean you have to organise it.

I would like to thank you all for your support and especially for members who help during and at the end of the events. Many ramblers groups are envious of our socials programme. Let us keep it that way!

### **Publicity Officer's Report - Brian Poulton**

This year we have bought our own gazebo for the SEBR stall. We have attended 2 events this year. The Crowthorne Carnival and the Bracknell Show.

I would like to put on record a thank you to Bill & Margaret Dart and Richard Mosses who volunteered to man the stall at the Crowthorne carnival in July. It just happened to be one of the hottest days of the year and England were playing Sweden in the quarter finals of the World Cup. This kept attendance lower than usual but as many people as possible were approached as recruitment possibilities.

I manned the stall at the Bracknell Show at Wildridings which was a better day weather wise but was hampered by the fact that 95% of Bracknell residents didn't appear to be aware that there was such an event.

We never know how successful these events are but at least we are keeping the Ramblers name in the public eye.

We have just had some new photos printed for our display stand which show some of the great SEBR walks in the last year.

Our Saturday morning walks are still very popular and I must thank Roger Jones, Jeff Lawrence, Barry Leach and Geoff Baker for their continued help and support along with Denise & Shirley who lead the slower walk when called upon.

This year I am going to concentrate on getting recruitment leaflets in as many locations as possible.

A Litter Pick walk has been scheduled for 21st October for which we will attempt to get publicity coverage

### **Countryside Secretary's Report – Richard Mosses**

Development continues. At the moment they are busy building to the north and west of Bracknell. The first is to the north of Harvest Ride and south of Forest Road round Cabbage Hill. All this



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development provides the Council with Section 106 money to improve parks and open spaces, such as Cabbage Hill which is to be designated a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) for which there is a car park along Forest Road. They are talking to Thames Water of providing a link to across the Forest Road to Hazelwood Lane. Another is north of London Road (Binfield) towards the Coppid Beech roundabout and there are already consultations for a further Amen Corner development the other side of London Road. For the Amen Corner north development, the associated SANG is called Piglittle Field, I expect they will provide a car park for this but I use the Popes Meadow car park off St. Mark's Road and Binfield FP11. In fact this SANG is over the border in Wokingham but it is administered by Bracknell. I am not sure what the state of the SANG at the TRL site is but the car park off Old Wokingham Road is now open and they are planning to close the car park along the Devil's Highway. Back further north, they have already started on the former golf course south of Forest Road and further west in Warfield they are planning a temporary closure of Avery Lane (Warfield Byway 8) while the development continues south of Newell Green and BF is planning to put a traffic order on it.

On Tuesday night at the BF LCAF meeting we were told of future SANGs, in Warfield south and west of the Moss End Garden Centre and the other side of Weller's Lane south of Frost's Folly and Warfield FP3. Another is planned for west of Malt Hill and south of Warfield FP6 to The Cut. The problem as I found with Piglittle Field is that they try to fit in a 1.5 miles walk into it which means the path goes all over the place, which is alright for those who want to walk in small circles but no use if you want to do a proper walk.



## Appendix 2

**Proposal to affiliate to HF Holidays with an investment of 100 x £1 shares funded by the £100 early booking discount on April 2019 holiday.**

### Background

In April 2019 thirty SEBR members are going on a group holiday to Puglia in Italy with HF Holidays. HF Holidays charge a non-member associate fee of £10 per person travelling unless they are either a HF member or a member of a HF affiliated club. Affiliation for SEBR would cost a one-off minimum investment of £100, this would be funded from the £100 holiday early booking discount. Once SEBR is affiliated every member of our group would benefit from the member price both for this holiday and future group holidays. 22 non-members are travelling on the holiday. An investment of £100 will therefore save £220 a net saving of £120 with potential further savings against future holidays.

### Benefits from affiliation:

- Avoid paying the £10 per person non-members' associate fee.
- SEBR benefit from **Annual Public Liability Insurance**.
- SEBR will also earn **Holiday Rewards** that can be used against future group holidays.
- [An option that, if SEBR publish a HF advert in our programme or newsletter, HF will pay SEBR £50 per year. *Note: It is not intended to take up this option - existing GDPR permissions do not give permission for SEBR members personal data to be used for marketing purposes.*]

### SEBR commitments required under this proposal:

- Invest £100 in HF Holidays shares – this would be funded by the 2019 holiday
- Display the affiliation on SEBR website.

### Concerns raised by SEBR committee:

1. Only a small proportion of the membership would benefit from HF holidays.  
Response: *Under this revised proposal the cost of affiliation is paid by the members going on the holiday.*
2. HF are a competitor to Ramblers Holidays from whom we receive significant income to the group.  
  
Response: *SEBR could continue to promote its relationship with Ramblers Holidays. Both relationships could be sustained and given equal prominence on the website. Many other Ramblers groups are existing HF Holidays affiliates.*
3. We were not happy with the demands of advertising on the website and correspondence.  
  
Response: *HF Holidays have clarified that the only requirement would be to display the affiliation on our website.*