

**RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION – WIRRAL GROUP**  
**MINUTES OF THE 64<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**HELD 30th NOVEMBER 2017**

**R.A.F.A. Club Oxton Birkenhead commencing 19.30hrs PENDING APPROVAL**

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The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 64th Annual General Meeting which commenced at 19.30hrs and was attended by 60 members

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Berny Goodheart, Josie Nichols, John Bovill, Angie Holmes, Lyn Francis, David Sibeon, Beryl Sibeon.

**2 Minutes of the AGM 26<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

The Minutes of the 2016 AGM were incorrect as the list of elected Officers included the role of Vice Chair which is not an elected role. Subject to this correction the minutes were accepted as true. Proposed by Jean Beasor and seconded by Dave Beacher.

**3 Matters arising from the Minutes**

No matters arising from the Minutes

**4 Chairman's Annual Report**

The Chairman opened his report by asking members to take a few moments to remember those members who, sadly, have passed in 2017. Amongst whom were Lil Baggaley, Nancy Butterworth, Christine Murray, Fred Coultas, Mike Dinsmore, Alec Hill, John Sones, Alan Wall and not forgetting Jamie Cass from Cass coaches.

He thanked all committee members for their hard work throughout the year. He also thanked Terry McKenna for his work in setting up the new website and noted that the transition from the old to new website had been seamless.

The following committee members are stepping down this time and will be missed:

Sarah Head, Publicity Officer; John Bovill, Website Manager and Steve Martin, Footpaths Officer. Also, Angie Holmes is stepping down from the Route Description Officer's role but will be continuing as Rambles Secretary.

He welcomed Terry McKenna and John Baker who are joining the committee as Website Manager and Committee member respectively. John has also picked up the Route Description Officer's role.

This leaves the positions of Footpath Officer, Publicity Officer and Social Secretary I vacant.

He thanked John Ackerman for his hard work as Treasurer and Brian Hughes for auditing the accounts. The accounts showed a small profit over the year and the figures justified the increases that were introduced in January.

Losses incurred by the coaches have been reduced from £3110 last year to £607 this year. However, numbers using the coach have fallen again this year by 72 people. This equates to nearly £1000 of lost income. So, please continue to support the coach and encourage members who don't use the coach to consider giving it a go.

The actual logistics of running a weekly Sunday coach offering a range of walks to suit all abilities is considerable. Thanks are due to all those who make this possible especially Josie Nichols our Bookings Officer and Angie Holme our Rambles Secretary as well as our walk leaders with special thanks going to Sarah Ashcroft who led 12 walks, Bill Nock who led 14 and Berny Goodheart who led 17.

The rest of our walking programme continues to be very popular. The Wednesday C walks are consistently well supported and have welcomed several new members to the club.

Sue Martin has consolidated the place of the Wednesday B- walks in our programme with an increase in people taking part.

The D walks organised by Janet Belton on alternative Wednesdays have been very popular.

The evening walks organised by Dave Beacher and Barbara Hackett and run on Tuesday and Friday evenings are well attended and much enjoyed. During May the evening walks formed part of Wirral's annual Festival of Walks.

Unfortunately, Steve Martin's B+ walk experiment wasn't as well supported as hoped and so Steve does not feel it is worth continuing.

Of course, effective and timely communication is essential to the success of our club. So, thanks go to Gerry Riley for providing the weekly Wednesday C walk maps and information, also for creating our "All Group" and "categorised" email facilities which have been very useful.

Thanks to John Bovill for all his early work in helping to establish the website and Terry McKenna for sustaining the momentum that delivered it and continuing to oversee and improve it. I am happy to report that the majority of bookings for the Sunday coach are now made by the bookings facility on the website. This has helped to reduce the burden on the Bookings Officer. Also, Linda Starkey, Membership Secretary reports that most new members discover us via the website.

Thanks to Linda for her hard work as Membership Secretary; she encourages new members and reminds possible leavers of the advantages of staying with us. Our membership numbers have remained constant this year.

Unfortunately we could not run our navigation courses this year. Sue Martin is taking up the mantle of running these courses next year and potential leaders are encouraged to sign up.

Ramblers Holidays brought us a welcome income of £370 this year. So members who book with Ramblers Holidays please indicate that you belong to Wirral Ramblers to ensure we receive this additional income.

The decline in Clubroom attendance and increasing fees for guest speakers led to the decision that from January 2018, meetings will be held fortnightly. Many thanks to Brenda Jones who has continued to cover the vacant role of Social Secretary I. Brenda with the help of a few regular attendees (thanks to Helen Clarke, John Ackerman, Bill Nock and Brian Grey) has delivered a varied and interesting programme within budget which has been much enjoyed by attendees. Thanks to our members who have contributed to the clubroom

programme. We have had an evening with a Ukulele band, talks about the history of Barnstondale, Nerja re-visited, solo trekking across Iceland; a great photography competition and an entertaining carols evening to name just a few of the highlights. Thanks also to everyone who acted as stewards on club nights.

This year Marcela Bellenand took over the role of Social Secretary II which also absorbed the duties of Weekend Officer. Marcela ran a varied and interesting social programme which has been much enjoyed by members across the club. Many thanks, to Marcela.

Steve Martin our Footpaths Officer created a database of local public footpaths and bridleways this year. It mirrors the national Pathwatch project (a nationwide exercise to walk and report on all our footpaths) and, aligned with our "Adopt a Footpath" scheme, launched in September, it is hoped that we will maintain our own record of footpaths. With the usual good responses from Wirral Borough Council, we should be able to continue enjoying a high standard on our local footpaths. So huge thanks to Steve for the successful completion of this mammoth task. Any member who would like to be part of this project and adopt a footpath please let any committee member know.

Thanks also to the hardy group of members who regularly undertake the valuable task of footpath maintenance.

Last year Roger Henry brought up the question of footpaths being open for shared use with cyclists. As a group we supported a motion to General Council put forward by Shrewsbury Area and others that stated in part that, "Council considers that the availability of the footpath network to users other than pedestrians could cause the surface of some paths to be damaged and compromise the safety of walkers". We asked our Area to support this motion also. The motion was passed unanimously and a second motion with similar intent was also passed. However, Ramblers must not be complacent in view of the vigorous campaigns currently being conducted by organisations such as British Cycling and Cycling UK.

In January, 28 people enjoyed an unusually warm week in Pitlochry. We enjoyed our usual holiday to Nerja in February. Marcela arranged a great bunkhouse weekend in Snowdonia in May. Dave Beacher organised a long distance walk along the Wolds Way in September. The common thread being that these events were much enjoyed by those who took part.

As always, the club, and its members individually, have contributed to and supported many charities this year; for example, Claire House, Christmas Boxes, Macmillan Cancer Research and Epilepsy Action to name just a few.

Thanks are also due to Miriam Dolphin who has quietly but effectively acted as our Welfare Officer over the last couple of years. Miriam will be leaving the area soon and will be a big loss to the club.

Thanks are also due to our joint General Secretaries Lyn Francis and Alice Cutts for their work, patience, application and attention to detail that is necessary to perform the role.

Although it is a year away, Alice, Lyn and I would like to inform members that we will be standing down from our roles after the next term. We felt that this notice would give plenty of time for members to consider taking over the roles. You will all realise that it is important to fill them.

I do see, and I am advised, about lots of people who contribute to our club in many ways, so I would like to say thank you to these people, many hands make light work.

In conclusion, we have had a good year, with our usual full walking programme, entertaining clubroom evenings and plenty of extracurricular activities. Without your involvement, none of this would be possible so I end by asking you all to continue with your support and help to maintain Wirral Ramblers as one of the best walking clubs.

## **6 Officers' Reports**

Reports and Annual Accounts included with AGM agenda.

## **7 Matters arising from the Officers' reports**

No matters arising from the reports that had been circulated with the AGM report

## **8 Motions**

One motion had been put forward:

That the post of Publicity Officer be deleted and be replaced with that of a further committee member without portfolio.

Proposed by, Gordon Clarke. Seconded by, John Ackerman.

The meeting accepted the motion.

## **9 Appointment of Scrutineers**

Scrutineers were not required

## **10 Election of Officers and Committee 2018**

The following Committee and Officers were elected:

Chairman	Gordon Clarke
Treasurer	John Ackerman
General Secretary	Alice Cutts/Lyn Francis
Bookings Officer	Josie Nichols
Social Secretary I	Vacancy
Social Secretary II	Marcela Bellenand
Rambles Secretary	Angie Holme
Membership Secretary	Linda Starkey
Footpaths Officer	Vacancy
Website Manager	Terry McKenna
Committee Member	John Baker
Committee Member	Helen Clarke
Committee Member	Berny Goodheart
Committee Member	Sue Martin

Non-committee posts:

Librarian	Bob Begbie
Route Descriptions Officer	John Baker

## **11 Appointment of Auditor**

The membership approved the appointment of Brian Hughes.

## 12 Any Other Business

Jean Beasor thanked members for their kindness and, in particular, for enabling her attendance at the club nights.

Bill Nock asked that more thought should be given to which venues are best served by a Sunday Coach departure from the Toby Carvery and to the needs of D walkers when selecting venues. Referred to the committee for further discussion.

Concern was raised about the standard of leadership on some walks. In response the Chairman advised that all leaders and potential leaders should be familiar with the Leaders' Handbook (an updated version of which is currently being finalised). Additionally, a new Walk Leader's checklist card was being issued. The club also holds annual walk leader and navigation courses. However, if anyone has a specific complaint about a leader, to let the committee know so that they can consider it.

There was discussion over the proposals that footpaths and bridleways be shared with cyclists and horse riders. Gordon Clarke pointed out that the Ramblers consultation on this matter was still ongoing.

Brenda Jones explained that as temporary Social Secretary I she will create the Club Social programme up until September 2018. However, she stressed that her successor will need to have the programme for October 2018 to March 2019 ready by June/July 2018.

Lively discussion ensued covering various ideas to promote the Sunday coaches and hopefully increase numbers. Referred to the committee for further discussion.

The future of the club programme card was debated. Referred to the committee for further discussion.

Gordon said that a number of club members do a huge amount of work behind the scenes which largely goes unnoticed. He wished to thank such people on behalf of the club. He presented Ramblers Awards to:

Steve Martin;  
Terry McKenna;  
John Bovill; and  
John Ackerman.

## 13 Date and time of next AGM

The next Wirral Ramblers AGM will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 commencing at 19.30hrs.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.00 hrs

Signed: .....

Gordon Clarke – Chairman

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Alice Cutts/Lyn Francis General Secretaries