



The Ramblers - Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Group

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting ^[L]_[SEP] held on Saturday 19th November 2022 at 10:00am at Chesterfield Library.

Present **Committee members:** Isobel McCormick (Chairman), Paul Peters (Treasurer), Barbara Milton (Group and Membership Secretary), Chris Wildsmith (Programme Coordinator), Mel Hardy (Footpath Officer).

Gavin Johns, Joyce Denton, Sue Harvey, Gavin Johns, Lorraine Watson, Rhona Gibbons, Kath Collins, Mike Bunting, Michael Stainer, Chris Wildsmith, David Moore, Graham Wright, Edna Robinson, Bill Eyre, Mike Sims, Kath Peters, David Blackburn, Eileen Blackburn, Val Fenton, Hazel Moul, Dermot Toberty, Simon Riddington, Rose Bryant, Neil Du-Roe, Tricia Graham, John Graham, J Bradley, Basil Merry, Martin Lowe, Jean Cookson, Cliff Lea.

1. Apologies for absence:

Colin Pick, Beryl Ransby, Jane & Nigel Willis.

2. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 20th November 2021.

Acceptance proposed by **Mel Hardy** seconded by **Dermot Toberty**.

3. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair Address & Report

The Chair's report is published separately on the Chesterfield Ramblers website.

Adoption of Chair's Annual Report:

Proposed: **David Blackburn.**

Seconded: **Gavin Johns.**

5. Presentation of Accounts and Balance Sheet for year ending 30th September 2020:

The Treasurer's report and accounts are published separately on the Chesterfield Ramblers website.

Adoption of Accounts:

Proposed: **Gavin Johns.**

Seconded: **Val Fenton**

6. Footpath Report:

The Footpath Report and accounts are published separately on the Chesterfield Ramblers website.

Adoption of Report:

Proposed: **David Blackburn.**

Seconded: **Gavin Johns**

Mel Hardy confirmed there has not been (nor is there likely to be) a return to assisting DCC with footpath maintenance. He emphasised how important it is for members to report any footpath issues they find on walks. As the system isn't very user-friendly Mel and Mike Sims are happy to help with reporting issues or submit reports if necessary.

Mel Hardy asked that all walk leaders continue let him have the number of walkers on each of their walks plus the distance covered to enable him to keep records. Since January 2022 22,552 miles have been recorded but this could be just half of the total miles undertaken by the group. These figures are important for discussing footpath issues with Rights of Way.

Bill Eyre queried why footpath volunteers couldn't do footpath maintenance without council support.

Mel Hardy confirmed there would be problems with landowners if this was done without the necessary permissions.

David Blackburn suggested walkers could take secateurs on walks to cut back vegetation covering stiles.

David Moore said the obvious answer to this issue was for councils and volunteers to work together and said he felt the council was failing to do this.

Isobel McCormick said that this couldn't be a political issue due to recent changes at the council. Also, that a network of volunteer groups allocated to each specific area was needed.

Mike Sims suggested the solution could be the implementation of the system that happens in Wingerworth where the volunteers operate by parish and receive an annual grant from DCC (annually £400 in Wingerworth).

David Blackburn offered thanks to Mel for the amount of work he puts into footpath and planning issues.

7. Election of Officers:

Isobel McCormick is retiring from the post of Chair after 3 years.

Mel Hardy proposed **Michael Stainer** as Chair.

This was seconded by **David Blackburn**

Paul Peters has agreed to carry on as Treasurer for another year.

Proposed: **Bill Eyre**

Seconded: **Dermot Toberty**

Barbara Milton is retiring from the posts of Group Secretary and Membership Secretary after three years.

Mike Bunting proposed **Sue Harvey** as Group Secretary.

This was seconded by **Dermot Toberty**

8. Committee Members and Unfilled Posts:

Chris Wildsmith will be taking over the official role as Membership Secretary, something he has done unofficially since taking over the Walks Co-ordinator role.

David Moore confirmed he is happy to continue with the publicity role for the time being. He suggested there is a need for someone to take on the wider role to publicise the local group by getting out into the community. He also said someone to promote the group on social media would be beneficial, especially if we want to attract younger members. There were no volunteers.

Countryside Officer: This post remains vacant.
There were no volunteers.

It was reiterated that all members are very welcome to attend the monthly Committee Meetings (held at St Thomas', Brampton) on the third Thursday monthly. It would be especially helpful if a representative of each of the walking groups within CNEDR also attended.

A vote of thanks was proposed to all that take on volunteer roles ~~and~~ this was seconded by all.

It was felt to be disappointing that with 370 plus members there were very few coming forward to take on essential committee roles.

9. **Election of Accounts Examiner:**

Lorraine Watson has agreed to continue in the role of Accounts Examiner for the next year.

10. **Any Other Business:**

01: Basil Merry introduced himself as a long-term member of the Ramblers who is now the secretary of the Rights of Way committee, which represents all of the footpath groups in Derbyshire. Meetings take place via Zoom and all are invited to attend. He expressed his thanks to all who do what they do to maintain footpaths. He went on to outline the monetary difficulties councils are facing at the moment leaving footpaths at the end of a long list of responsibilities. He confirmed that Rob Greatorex is not in full time employment yet and neither does he have a full team. He intends to allocate inspectors to specific areas once he has the staff.

02: Mike Sims said that, despite the request at last year's AGM, walkers are still not reporting footpath issues despite the fact that all that is required is a grid reference. He confirmed Mel's comment earlier that help is available dealing with the reporting system if required. Out of 370 plus members the same few people are the ones submitting reports which was disappointing. He also said that the system didn't provide updates on the whether the work had been completed or not.

Isobel McCormick suggested that walkers carrying out walk reces are the ones that need to be highlighting footpath problems and reporting these themselves or asking Mel & Mike to do it if needed.

03: Gavin Johns informed the meeting that John Newrick was very ill, having been diagnosed with early onset vascular dementia and Alzheimer's. He is currently in hospital following a heart attack. Visiting hours are between 2 and 8pm.

11 **Date and Time of next AGM**

A provisional date for next year's meeting is Saturday 18th November 2023, depending on the availability of the Library Theatre.

Following the meeting there was a splendid presentation carried out by Mel Hardy of photographs taken on various walks throughout the year, this brought back many memories. Our thanks to Mel and other members who contributed by forwarding their photographs to Mel.