

Ramblers Association West London Group

Annual General Meeting 7.30pm Tuesday 6th December 2022.

Northfields Community Centre, 71A, Northcroft Road, W13 9SS

Minutes

1. Welcome statement by Chair.

The chair welcomed 30 members of the group to the meeting. Three apologies for absence were received.

2. Agreement of minutes of last AGM, 7th December 2021 and matters arising.

The minutes of the 2021 AGM were approved.

It was noted that a group license for the use of Ordnance Survey maps has been obtained.

3. Reports from the committee.

The following reports were received from the committee.

3.1 Chair's report.

The first part of the year was once again overshadowed by rising Covid numbers and we had a couple of outdoor social gatherings around the Christmas period. But eventually the situation normalised and we were able to offer our regular walks programme of 3 walks per week most weeks. We also had a couple of shorter walks that ended with a meal in a pub. We also organised a number of well supported holidays throughout the year. In May a group of us spent a couple of days in Portsmouth, followed by a short walking holiday in Oxfordshire in June. Then we had the very successful week in the lake district at the end of September. The walks on all these holidays were provided by our own walk leaders. Thanks go to those and the organisers of these holidays.

We developed an expenses policy for walk leaders, but so far nobody has claimed for anything like travel expenses on recces. A number of walk leaders are using the group subscription to OS maps we bought. We organised a navigation course with a follow up training session and are planning to lay on another course in the new year as this one was oversubscribed. We also organised our own First Aid course. All this activity might explain why we are doing well and have attracted a number of new leaders.

Membership is around 500 and has been similar to previous years. The number of affiliates is up (50) and the number of those not providing an email address is slowly going down (86). As before we did send an invitation to the AGM to those by post and there are 9 who receive the bimonthly programme by post.

Looking forward we are planning three walking holidays in 2023. Faversham in Kent in April, an HF group holiday in June and a 6-day holiday to the Isle of Wight in September. My thanks go to all the committee members for their continued work over the year and to Chris Parnell for sending out the emails to members.

3.2 Treasurer's report.

Introduction

A short summary of the last two Financial Years is given in the Table 1 below: -

Table 1
Summary of Accounts for 2020-21 and 2021-22

	Financial Year	
	2021-22	2020-21
Opening balance	£1,511.28	£1,347.14
Receipts		
Area Funding	£277.78	£428.03
RW Travel	£110.00	£20.00
Self-Funded Holidays	£1,600.00	£0.00
Total Receipts	£1,987.78	£448.03
Payments		
Newsletters/Publicity	£90.00	£211.09
Expenses	£7.92	£22.80
AGM Meeting Costs	£60.00	£50.00
Walks Related	£165.36	
Walk Leader Training	£130.00	
Self-Funded Holidays	£1,600.00	
Total Payments	£2,053.28	£283.89
Surplus/Deficit	£65.50	£164.14
Closing balance	£1,445.78	£1,511.28

The accounts for 2021-22 were reviewed by our Independent Review and signed off. They were submitted to Ramblers Area HQ back in September.

Points of Information

As can be seen there is little major to report. Our running costs over the past two years have been low. We have saved money by maximising use of electronic communications. For example we have been relying more on email for our walk programmes to save printing costs, and use of Zoom to save on Committee meeting costs (compared to pre Covid).

Our current reserves over the year run at 306%. This is higher than Ramblers HQ Policy recommendation of 100%. Our level of expenditure is significantly lower than pre covid, and so working out a suitable baseline to look at reserves is not straightforward. We have been running with significantly lower costs over the past few years compared with the pre Covid years. So after careful consideration we do feel the current level of reserves can be safely reduced.

We therefore decided not to take up all the Area funding that was offered to keep reserves at reasonable levels. We will continue to watch our position and if reserves position remains healthy, we are likely to forgo further such payments. We also knowingly operated at higher levels of expenditure in 21-22, and made a slight loss this year to help reduce our reserves.

Our level of expenditure was increased this year notably from running a navigation course for Walk Leaders. Further such courses are being considered.

One new element to our accounts this year is using our Ramblers Bank account to help collect deposits for a holiday we have organised for members in the Yorkshire Dales in 2023. The use of our account simplified administration and this helped our organiser secure a significant discount with HF Holidays. (They would only deal with us as a group not as individuals.)

Conclusions

Overall our financial position is stable. Our expenditure is only slightly exceeding our income, despite forgoing some revenue.

Indeed the position with our reserves is strong – and in accordance with Ramblers Financial Policy we should look to reduce this. We plan to do so by carefully monitoring income and expenditure, ensuring we spend sensibly on matters of benefit to all in West London Ramblers.

The treasurer's report was formally accepted by the meeting.

3.3 Footpath Secretary's report.

PATH CHECKING

As mentioned at last year's AGM, we have 20 volunteer path checkers. On average, each checker is covering 12 paths. West London Group checks those paths in the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow, which are shown as Public Rights of Way (PRoW) on each borough's official Definitive Map. During 2020 and 2021 a total of 223 paths were checked and reports written, providing a lot of new data. All this is kept on paper (report forms etc. having been printed off). At first glance litter has been identified as the most pressing matter, with signage next.

Litter

Littering is often very bad where a path is part in one borough and part in another. It can seem that neither borough wants responsibility. Also unused land in urban areas seems to attract litter, which can invade adjacent footpaths. Last week the footpath secretary visited a section of the Dog Rose Ramble in Northolt. This was cleared of rubbish 2 years ago (with Ramblers participation) but it's building up again. Litter picking sticks have been bought and will be provided to clear this mess before it gets worse. Volunteers are invited to contact the footpath secretary. The borough will be asked to provide bags and arrange collection when they are full.

Signs

A number of path checkers have reported lack of signs where they are seen to be needed. Highway authorities are unlikely to do anything unless they are given clear details of the suggested site, probably photos and map references backed up by clear verbal description. After 2 years it is time to recheck paths anyway, but all checkers will need to be aware of the need for clear details when reporting anything relating to signs.

LOST PATHS

Ramblers central office require volunteers to research into lost paths that have already been identified. Josie Mizen is "Don't lose your way officer"

3.4 Walks and programme report.

The main points are covered in the Chair's report. Also potential new walks leaders were assured that both training and help is available from the committee and volunteers.

3.5 Membership secretary's report.

Membership report

	23 Oct 2022	30 Jun 2022	23 Feb 2022	18 Oct 2021	12 Jun 2021	13 Feb 2021	Oct 2020
Total	527	512	521	524	466	507	515
· Full members	477	467	479	488	429	476	487
· Affiliates	50	45	42	36	37	31	29
Contact via emails	383	367	371	365	340 (73%)	335	339
Contact in print	86	86	91	92	95	104	110
New members since previous report	28 (25 full, 3 affiliates)	17 (14 full, 3 affiliates)	23	29	16 full / 5 affiliates	18 full/2 affiliates	

Membership back to level of Oct 2021.

Note: Leavers (only have numbers since 23 July 2022): 16 in total (9 lapsed; 5 resigned; 2 moved area)

Other items of note:

Good to see the number contactable via email is increasing (72% of total); seem to be stuck at 86 for print mailing (maybe 'older' members). Seven of the 'by print' members live outside our area eg Wareham, Swansea.

3.6 Area delegates report.

a) The Inner London Area AGM will be on Saturday 4 February 2023 at 2pm at Waterloo Action Centre Mezzanine Hall , 14 Baylis Road London SE1 7AA

b) Other Groups' walks are disrupted by train strikes just like ours.

c) Chelsea and Westminster are still missing a Chairman and will lose the secretary at their AGM. Also Hammersmith, Fulham and Wandsworth group are to lose their walks coordinator after six years in the post.

d) General Council 2023 will be in Birmingham on 1st April.

e) There were 4900 members in Inner London Area at end of September 2022 and 101980 nationally.

f) The Ring and Loop projects are going well and a meeting of volunteers has been arranged (and rearranged) at TFL with Will Norman, the Mayor's cycling and walking commissioner. Several West London group members are involved and more volunteers are sought.

g) The Leisure walking strategy is still awaited from TFL.

4. Election of Committee.

The following posts were up for election:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Programme Coordinator
- Walks Organiser
- Footpaths Secretary
- Webmaster
- Publicity Coordinator
- Other committee members

The existing members of the committee stood for reelection with the exception of Jyoti Gudka who was happy to stand down if new committee members came forward. Rowena Muir and Vino Kanapathipillai have joined the committee. The meeting approved the new committee (Proposed by Marion Watkinson, seconded by Robin John):

Chair Monika Eady

Secretary Martin Harris

Treasurer Innes Garden

Membership Secretary Mary Rutherford

Walks Organiser Jackie Gower

Programme Coordinator Carolyn Oxley

Footpath Secretary Howard Densley

Webmaster Pete Grist

Committee members: Hansa Jadvapati, Susan Aldridge, Zainul Lawrence, Rowena Muir, Vino Kanapathipillai

5. Appointment of Ind. Examiner (auditor).

The meeting approved the appointment of Paul Ryan as the Independent Examiner (Auditor).

6. Discussion on the options of the new Walks manager system being introduced by head office.

In the discussion lead by the programme secretary the following points were made:

The printed programme was still required and therefore a table version would be produced on a two monthly basis. Comments on this version are welcome.

7. Questions about the Report and Ideas for 2023.

As in the report above attention was drawn to the area meeting for which a walk will be organized to end at the meeting venue.

8. Any Other Business

At the time of the meeting there was a place available on the Isle of Wight holiday scheduled for 22/9/23.

9. West London Group AGM in 2023.

This will be held at the Northfields community centre at a date to be decided.

The Ramblers' Association is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. Company registration number: 4458492. Registered Charity in England and Wales number: 1093577, registered charity in Scotland, number: SC039799. Registered office: 3rd floor, 1, Clink Street, London SE1 9DG