

RAMBLERS – SURREY AREA – SUTTON AND WANDLE VALLEY GROUP

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

Held on Sunday 17 November 2023 at 2.30 pm in the Robin Hood Pub, Sutton SM1 1SH

Present: Chair plus 38 members of the Committee and Group

Introductory remarks and welcome by the Chair: BP welcomed everyone to the 30th AGM and thanked those who had made the meeting and the lunch arrangements. She also explained that as the current Secretary of the Group was unable to take the minutes, Lucy B had very kindly stepped in.

Apologies for Absence: 7 members had sent their apologies

Minutes from the AGM held on 19 November 2023: approved with no amendments

Matters arising from the minutes: BP touched on the issued raised under AOB in the minutes, i.e. the concern raised by walk leaders that Ramblers HQ was planning to issue new guidance placing increased responsibilities on walk leaders, particularly around first aid training. This issue had caused concern nationwide in the early part of the year and there had been significant pushback on the subject. The result was that more nuanced, reasonable guidance had eventually been issued. We had not lost any walk leaders because of it.

Annual Report from the Chair: BP thanked committee members for their contributions to the annual report for the year ending 30 September 2024. The report had been made available to members in advance. Introducing the report, BP said that there had been 226 walks this year, slightly down on the numbers last year when 250 walks had been undertaken. But numbers attending the walks was increasing, and the Group had also been very active on the social front, including arranging two coach trips. She reiterated her thanks to walk leaders and said she remained keen to encourage new walk leaders. Although online training was now compulsory, she did not want this to put anyone off. It was very straightforward. One potential new walk leader had already completed the training. A walk had also been hosted for the London Blind Ramblers which gained very positive feedback and there were plans to do another next year. More details were in the Chair's written report.

Membership: JC pointed out that membership numbers were holding steady at around the 400 mark (413 when the report was written). We continued to have a steady stream of new members, but these numbers were offset by members opting to leave the Group. Quite a few new members have come through via Boundless (formerly the CCMA). It remained to be seen whether they joined any of our walks.

Publicity: As we still have no Publicity Officer, AD spoke on this subject. She said we had decided not to have a stand at the Sutton Fair, as its audience was largely young family-based and not a target audience for Ramblers. However, we continued to host a stand at the Carshalton ECO Fair and this had been well visited. She also commented that some organisations (e.g. the National Trust) are ceasing to produce paper leaflets advertising their walks or locations so in future we would have less to hand out at the stall.

Webmaster: PB said he continued to work in support of the website, Walks Manager and helping Liz T with the printed programme. BP thanked PB again for handling all the changes

associated with implementing the Walks Manager. She also thanked him for agreeing to extend his period as our Webmaster beyond the prescribed 6 years (Ramblers have agreed to this). A replacement Webmaster will be needed in the future.

Social Secretary: J R-T reported on the successful social events of the year, including the coffee mornings for members who no longer walk regularly with us. Although take-up of the coach trips had fallen away slightly, we had managed to fill the coaches by extending invitations to other Groups. She said this was her last year as Social Secretary. But she still had plenty of ideas for visits, social events etc. People should contact her if they wanted to take any of these ideas forward. BP thanked her for all the work she had done as Social Secretary.

Liaison: IH said he noted that people tended to use the Update to provide extra information about a walk that was already in the programme, rather than simply updating essential information. To keep the Updates short, he advised keeping messages to a minimum.

Footpaths: LB (who had lost her voice!) had nothing to add to the written report.

The Annual Report was approved by a show of hands.

Approval of Accounts for year ending 30 September 2024: CH reported that we had a healthy balance. Some of the funds (including those in the self-funded category) could be used to pay for the events planned to mark the Group's 30th anniversary, i.e. rental of a church hall.

Approval of the Accounts was proposed by Jackie D, seconded by Paul T and approved by a show of hands.

Independent Examiner: PR was thanked in his absence for his work as Independent Examiner. His re-appointment was proposed by BP, seconded by Mike D and approved by a show of hands.

Election of Officers: BP explained that some officers had a three-year limit on their roles, in addition, no-one could serve more than six consecutive years on the committee. All committee members are (re)elected each year. BP stated that there were several changes this year. She thanked everyone, especially the committee, for their support and help. Leaving the committee this year were HS, IH and LB. Although J R-T was leaving her role as Social Secretary, she would remain on the committee as a member.

First, the five committee members standing for re-election in the same roles were: BP as Chair, JC as Membership Secretary, CH as Treasurer, PB as Webmaster, AD as general member. They were proposed by Jackie D and seconded by Mary W. All re-elected by a show of hands.

Second, five committee members being elected for the first time or to a new post were proposed. There were Jenny K as Liaison, Jackie D as Social Secretary, Liz T as Secretary, Sheelagh D as Footpaths, and Jan R-T as general member. They were proposed by Roz and seconded by Kieran. All elected by a show of hands.

The post of Publicity Officer remains vacant.

BP thanked those leaving the committee for their services and presented them with gift cards.

AOB: There was discussion of the request by Reigate Group to actively publicise SWV Group walks on their website as they were so short of their own leaders. This is having a trial run and will be reviewed. One potential issue raised was that of the leaders having to book (and perhaps pay a deposit) for lunch places in a pub used on a walk. It was agreed that leaders should perhaps only be expected to pay deposits for members of our own Group (if they wanted to),

and participants from other Groups or visitors should be asked to make their own arrangements direct with the pub.

The Group is 30 years old this year. Events to mark the anniversary are being planned. A celebratory party is to be held on 17 May (arranged by Marian F) and also a 30 mile walk around the SWV boundary, to take place over 3 consecutive days and to include picnics and possible pub lunches. More details will be advised nearer the time.

Date and Venue of 2025 AGM: To be advised

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.