

**Oxon Weekend Walkers AGM
Sunday 5 November 2017 2pm
Eynsham Village Hall**

AGENDA

1. Apologies: Lyn Roberts, Laura Thomlinson, Hazel Connolly, Kevin and Sheila Hessey, Helen O'Neill, Hilary Peck.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 20 November 2016: Accepted.
3. Reports from current Committee

a. Chair - Helen Barham

Walks

Walking is of course the lifeblood of this walking group, and I'm pleased that we offered a walk every weekend this year, covering 484 miles and many areas of the county. This was made possible by our walk leaders. I want to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to ALL our walk leaders, many of whom led several walks. Particular thanks to Vanessa and Lyn, who led five each, Devinder and Anna, Gavin, and Shelia and Kevin who led four.

Keeping the calendar full has been a little nerve-wracking. Whereas we had 26 walk leaders last year, this year we had 20. Thank you to Nicola Copeman for putting a couple of walks at short notice to fill gaps. Thank you also to Laura Thomlinson and Eleanor Blyth who led their first walks this year. Six members of OWW joined the Area walk leaders course this autumn, and are now planning some practice walks.

At the beginning of the year, the current committee agreed that our key commitment is to current members of the group. There has been much discussion about offering shorter walks to attract new members. What happens in reality, however, is that our regular members don't turn up and we don't particular attract new members either. We also feel that there are plenty of groups out there for people who only want to do 3 or 4 miles. We have offered a really good range of walks this year, ranging from 4 to 15.5, and the average was 10 miles. Clearly what we are doing works, because we had an average of 16 people per walk. So, our philosophy has been to keep doing what we're doing, and, as Nicola will report, this seems to work in terms of attracting new members. A few people have offered walks starting later in the day, which have also proved popular and it would be nice to see a few more with a leisurely start.

I hope that we can continue to offer at least one walk every weekend, with a good variety of distances, terrain and start time. There is also no reason why we can't offer two walks on the same day or weekend – Oxfordshire is a huge county and I'm sure many people miss walks because of the driving distances involved.

20s&30s

This year we have forged new links with the 20s&30s group, who are "keen" for some of their older members to move up into our group. However, some of these people are their regular walk leaders, so they have a bit of a dilemma. We have offered some officially shared walks and it's nice to see members of 20s&30s turning up on some of our other walks.

Countryfile Live

A big event for the Area this year was hosting a stand on behalf of Ramblers UK at Countryfile Live in August. I joined the steering group to help make sure that us younger members were represented and dispel the myth that Ramblers is not just for the retired. The show went really well, with lots of visitors to the stand. Many members of OWW also helped man the stand over the four-day show. We all enjoyed ourselves, and it was good to have some interesting conversations about all the good work Ramblers does, such as promoting access to the countryside, campaigning (e.g. working with Network Rail to negotiate on proposed closures of railway crossings), and clearing footpaths. Ramblers is actively involved in the English coast path project which I for one am very excited about!

Weekend away

We had one weekend away this year, to the Cardigan coast, again organized by Carolyn. It was clearly a fabulous weekend. In the past we have had more weekends away, and it would be lovely to see a few more.

Long-distance paths

Several small groups of OWW members have been walking long distance paths. This tend not to be official OWW events for various reasons, but it's great that the group provides opportunities for these groups to come together. We have had groups walking the Wales Coast Path, Cotswold Way, Darcy Dalton Way, Roman Way and Offa's Dyke path, to name a few. Currently groups are walking the South Downs way, Pembrokeshire Coast Path, and the Thames Path.

Thank you very much to this year's committee for all their contributions and time, and particularly to Jane Pearson who doesn't have to write a report but does a sterling job writing up meeting minutes. Thank you also to all our leaders and walkers, for lots of fabulous walks, interesting conversations and good cheer. Long may it continue!

b. Membership Secretary – Nicola Copeman

Nationally, there are approximately 105,000 members of the Ramblers and what I feel is quite amazing is, that it is reported that, 90% of those members renew their membership every year, even though they may not walk anymore. In fact, nationally, something like 75% of members do not walk at all but are supporting the campaign work of Ramblers to maintain access to the countryside members and might do voluntary work clearing footpaths. We estimated that approximately 30% of our group have walked with OWW this year.

The Area Ramblers make it one of their aims to recruit new members and this year there have been events such as Countryfile Live, the Canal Day in Banbury and other events which are part of that campaign. Both the Oxfordshire Area in general and our group, the Weekend Walkers do very well at recruiting and so we can pat ourselves on the back for that result. The Weekend Walkers are fortunate in that our members find us in lots of different ways including using the internet, Facebook and recommendations from us.

Our membership figures are healthy. We started the year with 150 members and now have 162 at the last count.

My role as Membership Secretary is to answer email queries and to send emails to welcome our new recruits. The Ramblers regularly send me lists of new members and an updated spread

sheet of all our members, so I can see who has joined and who has left. Bearing in mind that we do lose members, our net gain of 12 extra members is actually more than 12 new people. At the last count, I made it actually 30 new people.

I'd like to finish with a thank you to all for making new walkers to our group so very welcome. We all know how it feels to turn up and join in a new activity, not knowing anyone, so I think we do make that extra effort to include new potential members into our conversations, and this encourages them to come back and even join. So, please keep up the good work and thank you.

c. Group Representative to Area Executive – Nicola Copeman

I volunteered to attend the Area meetings as I live close to Kidlington, where the group meets, and I felt Gavin had suffered enough! My role is to represent OWW and to liaise between Area and our own committee.

The Area Group has a representative from each of the walking groups in Oxfordshire, and it meets every three months to discuss issues raised either by the local groups or by the National Ramblers Group.

The Ramblers organisation divides the country into over 50 areas broadly coinciding with a county or regional boundary.

To quote a statement from the Ramblers website...

“Area volunteers help support and coordinate the work of the groups in delivering our mission. For example, they help identify what funds groups need and encourage groups to try out new things.”

This year there has been much debate on many issues ranging from Countryfile Live to the regularity of newsletters, arranging walks for the disabled, first aid courses, map reading training and using Meetup to attract new walkers.

The meeting discussed the relevance of Ramblers attendance at Countryfile Live. It was considered important that the national body, rather than just Area, be represented to raise its profile at an event of countrywide interest where similar organizations can be found.

d. Social Secretary – Anna Gillespie

Summary of Socials offered in the period 2016 - 2017:

- Dec - Non-Christmas meal at La Cucina – (Jane & Vanessa) 26
- Dec - Christmas Drinks at the Lamb & Flag (Neil)
- Feb - Ross Noble, comedy (Gavin) 3
- Feb - I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue, Playhouse, theatre (Vanessa) 20
- Feb - Corona Strings with meal beforehand, SJE, classical concert (Anna) 9
- April - All About Coffee (Mark & Sheena) sell out 12
- April - 2 Narrow Boat Trips (Mark & Sheena) sell out 12
- May - Reduced Shakespeare Co theatre (Catherine) 6
- June - Golem theatre (Catherine) no takers
- Skids - 40th Anniversary (music) Gavin no takers
- July - Quiz night for VSO (Julie Goldsmith) no takers, bit last minute

- July - Kathy Lette, comedy (Helen), no takers
- July - Cogges Beer and Cider Festival (Gavin) no takers
- August - Mikron Theatre (Ian Mac) 5
- Sept - Kristin's Fond Farewell (Baś)
- Sept - Flown theatre (Nicola)
- Sept - Corona Strings with meal beforehand, SJE, classical concert (Anna) 8

The course on map reading (4-7 October) and Countryfile Live in August were also sociable. Discounting these two, to my knowledge 17 events were offered, which is an average of 1.42 per month.

Best attended – boat trips offered by Mark and Sheena were a sell-out. Coffee tasting session also full, along with Non Xmas Meal and a good 20 for I'm Sorry...

5 were sell-outs, but sadly 5 had no takers. I don't know why nobody wanted to go to ancient Punk band when the host suggested wearing ear plugs...

The success of a social should not be measured by numbers attending, although the number needs to be greater than zero. If 5 people have an enjoyable evening out together, that is a success in my book.

First classical concert attracted 9 people including one for whom it was their first classical concert and they returned a year later for a second go!

I can't see much rhyme or reason. Two comedy gigs got nul points, but a previous one Helen put on had about 15. And it was very rude.

My impression is that a good number of people like to eat together beforehand. Perhaps we could offer more meals out? If you plan to do something anyway, there is nothing lost by offering it as a social – we appreciate your generosity. The only work involved is in pre-ordering any tickets and dealing with the odd enquiry. Important to have a cut-off date to get people to commit.

Another gap I can see is for outdoor/sporty activities.

A question was raised about notifications and Anna pointed out that she sends an email to the Yahoo email group in addition to the events being publicized on the website and Facebook page; Nicola includes guidance on joining the email list and Facebook community in her welcome message to new members. It appears that some members have been unsuccessful in joining the group email list and it was agreed to discuss the question of opting out rather than in under AOB.

e. Webmaster – Dave Flitney

Handover of the website from the previous office holder, Neil Hoggarth, went well. Neil provided me with a comprehensive briefing and introduction to the site configuration, operations and documentation. Since then the year proceeded with the website mostly just ticking along.

There was a period of approx. 10 days in April/May when the website was broken after an unplanned upgrade was imposed upon us by our service provider. During the upgrade the key

version of the software, upon which our website is based, was irreversibly removed. To fix this we moved to a new, cloud-based, hosting solution and then had to modify both the software and the database to get it up and running again. I'd like to thank Alan Rew for helping with this.

While a few minor modifications have been made to the site, wider plans to develop a replacement have stalled. Largely this is due to my finding it hard to select a suitable solution with full like-for-like functionality. To get this back on track I believe we need to actually commit to one of the candidate solutions and attempt to build a proof of concept site. To this end, if re-elected to the post, I would like to invest some time before the next committee meeting to learning the system offered on the "Ramblers Webs" site so we can assess its fitness for purpose.

Helen Barham (Chair) noted that the reason for seeking an alternative was to remove the group's reliance on the services of a web expert.

f. Treasurer – Devinder Sivia

Accounts: 1 October, 2016 to 30 September, 2017

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
01/10/16	Balance brought forward			207.30
30/10/16	Income from Walking Partnership with Ramblers Holidays.		20.00	227.30
01/11/16	Area Funding received.		119.50	346.80
23/11/16	Hi-viz vests + rucksack covers for Group (Vanessa Corrick).	59.21		287.59
11/01/17	Payment for hire of hall for AGM.	68.25		219.34
14/03/17	Area Funding received.		119.50	338.84
21/04/17	Website/domain cost (Dave Flitney).	83.84		255.00
30/09/17	Balance carried forward			255.00

- Account signatories: Devinder Sivia, Jane Pearson and Helen Barham.
- Independent examination of accounts for 2016/2017 by Ann Thompson.
- Annual return submitted to Area.
- Group allocation for 2017/2018: standard group formula applied, giving £239.

g. Walks Programme Secretary – Phil Jeffery

In the period 20th November 2016 to 5th November 2017 the group was successfully led on 51 walks by 21 volunteers, covering a total of 485 miles. The longest walk was 15.5 miles and the shortest was 4 miles. Of the 21 leaders:

- 2 led 5 walks
- 3 led 4 walks
- 5 led 3 walks
- 3 led 2 walks
- 8 led 1 walk

Four of the walks were in conjunction with Oxon 20s30s, who provided one of the leaders. One of these joint walks attracted the largest turnout (48 – well done, Alison). Average attendance lay around the 16 mark. Our total person-miles walked was 7,869.

Summary of past 2 years

15th Nov 2015 to 20th Nov 2016.

67 walks led by 28 volunteers. Total distance of 575.5 miles with walks ranging from 3 to 16 miles.

16th Nov 2014 to 15th Nov 2015

65 walks led by 27 volunteers. Total distance of 573 miles with walks ranging from 3 to 15 miles.

Summary by walk leader during 2016-2017 reporting period

Walk Leader	Number Led	Total miles
Vanessa	5	50.5
Lyn	5	49
Kevin + Sheila	4	47.5
Gavin	4	37
Devinder + Anna	4	33.5
Nicola	3	31
Kerry	3	24.5
Jane P (+ Hazel on 1)	3	33
Helen (± Dave)	3	25
Phil + Judith	3	25
David Haynes	2	18.5
Annie	2	14.5
Mark + Sheena	2	20.5
Laura Thomlinson	1	12
Eleanor Blyth	1	10.5
Tony	1	7.5
Neil	1	9
Alison	1	9
Carolyn	1	9
Matthew Hutton	1	9
Ian + Catherine	1	10

Details of all walks during 2016-2017 reporting period

Date	leader	start	walkers	Dist (mls)	Dist from Oxford (mls)	Mid-week forecast
27/11/16	Tony	Stonesfield	14	7.5	10	Mild Breezy Dry
04/12/16	Lyn	Lower Heyford	20	9.5	12	Cool Breezy Dry
11/12/16	Phil + Judith	Ewelme	15	9.0	12	Mild Breezy Dry
18/12/16	Neil	Milton Hill 🏰	22	9.0	10	Cool Calm Dry
28/12/16	Helen	Wantage	6	8.0	14	Mild Calm Dry
01/01/17	Lyn	Woodstock	14	8.5	8	Cold Vey Wet and Windy
08/01/17	Helen + Dave	Bletchington	32	9.0	7	Mild Calm Showery
15/01/17	Nicola	Wytham Wood	15	12.0	3	Mild Breezy Wet
22/01/17	Vanessa	Watlington	19	10.0	15	Cold Calm Dry
29/01/17	Devinder + Anna	Ditchley Park	15	6.5	12	Mild Windy Showery
05/02/17	Gavin	Morton	21	10.5	25	Cool Breezy Dry
12/02/17	Kevin + Sheila	Hambleton	6	12.0	21	Cold Breezy Dry
19/02/17	Kerry	Cogges	27	7.0	10	Warm Breezy Dry
28/02/17	Alison	Faringdon (+20s30s)	48	9.0	16	Warm Very Windy Dry
05/03/17	Nicola	Abingdon	15	10.0	6	Cool V Windy Showery
12/03/17	Mark + Sheena	Yarnton	17	7.0	4	Very Warm Breezy Wet
19/03/17	Lyn	Great Tew	20	10.0	16	Very Warm Gusty Dry
26/03/17	Jane + Hazel	Chilton	9	12.0	13	Hot Windy Dry
02/04/17	Annie	Oxford	13	8.0	1	Hot Calm Dry
09/04/17	Vanessa	Burford	18	15.0	17	Very Hot Breezy Dry
16/04/17	Devinder + Anna	Islip	14	9.0	5	Very Warm Breezy Dry
23/04/17	Gavin	Buscot	13	7.0	18	Very Warm Calm Dry
30/04/17	Gavin	Stow	25	9.5	24	Warm Breezy Dry
07/05/17	Kerry	Burford	17	7.5	17	Hot Calm Dry
14/05/17	Phil + Judith	Nettlebed	14	9.0	17	Hot Breezy Dry
21/05/17	Kevin + Sheila	Maidensgrove	11	12.0	17	Warm Breezy Dry
28/05/17	Annie	Hampstead Norreys (+20s30s)	22	6.5	19	Hot Calm Dry
02/06/17	Vanessa	Marsh Baldon	5	4.0	5	Hot Calm Dry
04/06/17	Laura Thomlinson	Combe	22	12.0	9	Hot Breezy Dry
11/06/17	Carolyn	Wheatley	22	9.0	5	Hot Windy Dry
18/06/17	Nicola	Woodstock	14	9.0	8	Very Hot Calm Dry
25/06/17	Matthew Hutton	South Newington (+20s30s)	4	9.0	18	Hot Breezy Dry
02/07/17	Devinder + Anna	Charlbury	14	10.0	13	Hot Breezy Dry
09/07/17	Ian + Catherine	Ewelme	10	10.0	12	Hot Breezy Dry
16/07/17	Jane	Uffington	9	11.0	17	Hot Breezy Dry
23/07/17	Vanessa	Henley	13	15.5	21	Hot Windy Dry
30/07/17	Lyn	Wendover	13	11.0	22	Hot Windy Showery
06/08/17	Mark + Sheena	Ilmington	7	13.5	30	Hot Windy Dry
13/08/17	Kevin + Sheila	Goring	8	13.5	17	Hot Calm Dry
20/08/17	Jane	Mill End	14	10.0	21	Hot Windy Dry
27/08/17	Helen	Wantage	20	8.0	14	Hot Breezy Dry
03/09/17	Vanessa	Cumnor	18	6.0	3.5	Hot Breezy Showery
10/09/17	Phil + Judith	Great Tew	16	7.0	16	Cool Windy Showery
17/09/17	Kerry	Lechlade	16	10.0	19	Warm Breezy Dry
24/09/17	David Haynes	Combe (+20s30s)	32	11.75	9	Hot Breezy Dry
01/10/17	Gavin	Carterton	14	10.0	14	Cool Windy Dry
08/10/17	Eleanor Blyth	Boars Hill	10	10.5	1	Cool Windy Dry
15/10/17	Lyn	Enstone	20	10.0	10	Warm Breezy Dry
22/10/17	Devinder + Anna	Charlbury	20	8.0	13	Cool Windy Dry
29/10/17	Kevin + Sheila	Oxford	16	10.0	0.8	Cool Breezy Dry
05/11/17	David Haynes	Eynsham	18	6.7	5	Cold Breezy Dry

4. Prize Giving

We wanted to acknowledge the contributions of our walk leaders by giving out some gifts/prizes:

- Greatest number of walks led – Lyn Roberts and Vanessa Corrick
- Stepping in to lead two walks at the last minute – Nicola Copeman
- Leading for the first time – Eleanor Blyth and Laura Thomlinson
- Leading in the worst weather conditions – Lyn Roberts and Nicola Copeman
- Leading the largest group – Alison Thomas
- Leading the “most civilized” walk (late start, 7.5 miles, tea and cake afterwards) – Devinder Sivia and Anna Gillespie

5. Stand down of current Committee

Carolyn Blackmore (Without Portfolio), who has served several years on the committee in different roles, wished to stand down but the other members were prepared to continue. Carolyn was thanked for her contributions over the years.

6. Election of new Committee

Post	Candidate	Proposer	Second
Chair	Helen Barham	Sheena Derry	Phil Jeffery
Group rep to Area	Nicola Copeman	Vanessa Corrick	Phil Jeffery
Walks sec	Phil Jeffery	Helen Barham	Richard Twine
Social sec	Anna Gillespie	Helen Barham	Kerry Forkner
Webmaster	DaveS Flitney	Nicola Copeman	Kerry Forkner
Membership	Nicola Copeman	Kerry Forkner	Phil Jeffery
Publicity	No volunteer	-	-
Footpaths	-	-	-
Treasurer	Devinder Sivia	Vanessa Corrick	Dave Flitney
Secretary	Jane Pearson	Mark McCappin	Nicola Copeman
W/O portfolio	Richard Twine	Helen Barham	Jane Pearson
W/O portfolio	Pam Cartledge	Nicola Copeman	Phil Jeffery
W/O portfolio	David Haynes	Helen Barham	Dave Flitney

The duties of Publicity officer will continue to be covered by the committee.

7. Walks and events programme for 2017–2018

The programme is looking empty. Please encourage and help new leaders.

8. Suggestions for future initiatives

- Training/practice for new walk leaders – ideas suggested by the meeting were to:
 - i. Earmark days for a recce in the Events Calendar and provide names of people willing to help.
 - ii. Suggest that anyone planning a recce emails the group to ask for people to join them to practice their skills. Likewise, anyone who would like help
 - iii. Offer something social such as an evening for leaders, or a morning walk followed by a social event for people thinking of leading, to plan walks and possibly assign walk buddies
- Walk leader mobile number (single number that forwards calls to that week's walk leader)

Oxon 20s & 30s operate this system and Dave Flitney has the technical details. Members then need use only one number to contact the leader and the leader need not publicize their personal details. At the moment some leaders provide a number for a landline rather than a mobile but consequently they cannot be contacted on the day of the walk. On the downside, there is a small annual cost and there must be an administrator to update the forwarding after each walk. It was agreed that we monitor the experience of Oxon 20s & 30s.
- Photo competition?
 - i. It was agreed that instead of running a competition within the group, it would be better to seek a suitable external competition to enter.
 - ii. At present photos appear only on our Facebook page. It is hoped that our new website will include a blog so that people can share pictures more easily.
 - iii. Helen acknowledged that not all the group uses Facebook. She also explained that people can use Facebook in a very low-key way in order to see photos but without having a Facebook presence.

9. Any other business

Email List

As noted in the discussion following the Social Secretary's report, the question of opting out of the group email list, as opposed to opting in, was raised. We must check whether this action would contravene the requirements of the new general data protection regulation (GDPR) that comes into force on 25th May 2018. However, it is acceptable to use email lists for the normal running of an organization. **Chair** will contact Dave Cavanagh, Area Chairman, to find out if Head office will be providing guidance when the new legislation comes into force. The question was also asked whether we could start to include members of other Ramblers groups in the list. Two members noted problems with joining the Yahoo group. Dave F to investigate.

The formal part of the meeting concluded to make way for tea and the "Cake Off", which was won by Hazel Geatches, with a lemon drizzle cake.

Hazel was asked to pick a ticket from the sugar bowl for the walk leaders' draw (one entry per walk led; bonus entry for first walk). The prize of a £20 Cotswold Outdoor voucher was won by Gavin Powell, who had led four walks.