

**Oxon Weekend Walkers AGM
Sunday 4th November 2018
The Plough, Wolvercote**

MINUTES

1. Apologies received from Treasurer, Social Secretary, Without Portfolio 2 and two non-committee members. In total 18 members attended.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 5th November 2017 were accepted.
3. Reports from current Committee

a. Chair

Reflecting back, I have to conclude that it's been a funny old year! With snow in the November and the "beasts" early on, we cancelled three walks, which is unprecedented. Winter dragged on into April but then we were rewarded with the most glorious summer that only segued into autumn over the last few weeks. My "Four Seasons" series felt more like two winter walks and two summer walks!

Walking is of course the lifeblood of this walking group, and I'm pleased that we offered a walk almost every weekend this year, made possible by 25 walk leaders. I want to thank to ALL our walk leaders, many of whom led several walks. Particular thanks to the two leaders (plus the Chair) who each led five, as they did last year. Thanks also to the couple whose four walks included the Oxford Greenbelt way, and to a new leader who also led four and introduced us to a new area of the county.

We've set up a couple of initiatives this year to help our group:

- We now have a call forwarding number, which means that you only have to remember one number, and no-one has to share their personal numbers. We did have a huge teething problems, which is inevitable with a new system, but it now seems to be running smoothly.
- We also have a group subscription to OS maps online, to help with walk planning. We hope we can use this to build up a walk library. Anybody in the group can use it.

A big change this year has been our new website. The old one was fine in terms of the user interface, but meant a lot of work behind the scenes for our social and walks programme secretaries, and only the webmaster could make changes to the content. The new website is based on a generic offering from Head Office (HO), which Webmaster has adapted. It allows access by more committee members, and it's great to have a news post. We hope in the future to make this into a blog post where people can share photos from walks, instead of only using Facebook.

We had two splendid weekends away, one walking half of the Bishops Castle Ring in Shropshire, and another on the Cardigan coast.

The bigger picture

This year I have been much more aware that, whilst we mostly function as a local walking group, we are part of a national organization, Ramblers, particularly as we wrestled with implementation of the GDPR. The upshot of this is that communication preferences are now managed at national level, and our mailing list is populated from these preferences.

Membership Secretary and I joined the Area steering committee running a stand at Countryfile Live this year. Many OWW members enjoyed manning the stand and engaging with the public

about the joy of walking. We had more than 1000 visitors to the stand over the 4 days, including members from HO.

This year we have also had a Ramblers volunteer roadshow in Oxford where a few members attended various workshops on publicity, walk leading, GDPR and various initiatives that Ramblers is planning. I enjoyed a brainstorming session about building up membership, and engaging with people who like to walk but not in groups, but benefit from the huge amount of work that Ramblers does to maintain our footpaths – something that many people are not aware of.

Before signing off, I also want to mention that we have had a lot of grumbles this year, and I would like people to remember that committee members are volunteers with day jobs and families. Please be patient as we adopt new ways of doing things.

I want to finish with a big thank you to all the Committee members for all their time, effort and enthusiasm, and particularly to Webmaster for the huge amount of time and effort that went into our new website. Thank you also to all our leaders for lots of fabulous walks, and to members for interesting conversations and good cheer. Long may it continue!

b. Publicity – Chair

We don't currently have a publicity officer – this role is covered by the committee, mainly by the Chair.

Our publicity is largely through our website and Facebook presence, which seems to attract a steady flow of new members. In light of this, the Committee decided at the last meeting not to produce any more printed literature once the current batch has run out, given that electronic means have a far wider reach.

It's lovely to see walk photos on our FB group, but it would be nice to see posts from a few more people. I know a lot of people don't "do FB" but it's very easy to use it in a very low-key way.

At the Roadshow this year, we talked about Twitter as a promotional device, and we hope to set up a Twitter account this year.

This year we had two golden opportunities to talk about OWW on Radio Oxford. Two committee members did a slot each in the spring. The Area Chair then invited me to do another short slot on Radio Oxford's "Club of the Week" a couple of months ago. I have to say that it's a slightly odd experience, but a good way to reach a lot of people, and both drew some members to our Facebook group at least.

I'm really pleased about offers of to help set up a public Facebook page and to dabble in Twitter for us. If anyone is interested in standing for publicity officer, we would love to have you!

c. Walks Programme Secretary

It has been a successful year in which we walked a total of 524 miles over 53 walks and led by 25 sets of walk leaders (29 individuals). All these figures were an increase compared with 2017. There was one evening walk. Thank you to the three members who led 5 walks each and to the couple who led the greatest distance with a total of 65.5 miles (some of boat assisted?). Thanks too to the first-time leaders and those members who either led, or offered to lead, at the last minute and to the three who led short walks. Finally thanks go to Treasurer for leading the annual picnic walk.

d. Membership Secretary

In this role I receive regular emails from Ramblers Head Office which contain files of all our members and details of who has left and who has recently joined. There have been a few changes over the year due to the new data handling laws, and so now I also receive information regarding each member's preference regarding communication; if the member would like to receive emails, post or telephone messages.

I try to welcome new members by emailing them a welcome message, remind them about our website and invite them to join our Facebook page.

We currently have 132 members which is slightly lower than this time last year when we 152.

I am grateful for the warm reception that, as a group, we give our new potential walkers and I think this is key to whether they decide to join us or not. I think many of us remember what it is like to turn up, alone, to join a group of people for the first time. It can feel very daunting. But, I think new walkers are made very welcome and soon feel part of the gang. Thank you for looking after them.

It was asked whether the decline in membership was reflected elsewhere in Ramblers. Unfortunately, although Membership Secretary had requested such information from Ramblers, it was not provided. Chair noted that the communications from Ramblers about GDPR could have prompted non-active members to discontinue; many people assigned to OWW are not seen on walks. Webmaster added that the Ramblers new Insight Hub should give access to more information on membership in future.

e. Group Representative to Area Executive

The Area meetings are held four times per year on Monday evenings in Exeter Hall, Kidlington. The Oxfordshire Area has approximately 2200 members over ten different walking groups.

The Area Committee consists of a Chair, Secretary, Footpath Secretary, Walks Coordinator, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Parish Path Warden and there are representatives from all of the ten walking groups in the Oxfordshire area.

The role of the committee is to discuss ideas and suggestions from Ramblers Head Office along with issues that arise in our own area such as footpath maintenance, financial matters, events like Countryfile Live, Membership in the groups, and to organise events such as first aid courses map reading courses and the Area Picnic.

The Area has its AGM on 2nd February 2019 in Wytham Village Hall. As the current Chairman, will be stepping down, the election of a new chair and committee will take place.

There is a first aid course planned for 16th February 2019 at Red Cross House, Abingdon.

I am happy to continue as Area Rep, with support from the committee when I cannot attend meetings.

Over the last year, I was grateful to Webmaster and another member, a former Chairman and Area Rep, who stepped in on the occasions when I couldn't attend.

f. Social Secretary

Many thanks to all who have offered socials, which included meals, plays performed indoors and out, concerts, a street fair and an archeological walk in Abingdon. Numbers were often on the low side, but my impression is that, even if the group is small, the events are always enjoyed by those who come. It seems a shame to cancel an event if only four sign up, as everyone would have a good evening out together. Theatre events continue to be popular. If there is an event which you would like to go to anyway, then please consider posting it as a social to include others! Members can now post socials themselves using the new website.

g. Webmaster

This year saw:

- the establishment of a new group phone/text forwarding system
- transfer of the website to a new content management system (CMS)
- dealing with the introduction of the GDPR.

In January we subscribed to a VOIP phone service (Andrews & Arnold ISP) to provide a generic "Walk Leaders Number" which is forwarded to the appropriate walk leader's phone at the start of each week. A separate SMS gateway (intelliSMS) provides text message forwarding.

A new website (Ramblers-Webs) went live in August. Reception has been mixed with a few teething issues needing to be ironed out. The site aims to support non-technical personnel creating and editing local content such as news, events and articles, i.e., committee members can be given the rights to manage role-appropriate content as and when they feel confident to do so. It also provides a feed of the walk-programme data direct from Ramblers' Group Walks and Events Manager (GWEM). Walk leaders are encouraged to enrol as content providers so they can enter walks directly on Ramblers' GWEM.

To help comply with GDPR, the old public Yahoo! mailing list was replaced with a pair of private group email lists (Groups.io), membership@oww.goups.io and walk-leaders@oww.groups.io. These lists are populated with a member's email address only where HO has informed us of appropriate consent from that member. We currently update the list once a month when HO send us our membership data. Additionally, we have published a Privacy Policy page on the website to outline the personal data we, and our partner service providers, are holding.

There was a question about becoming a content provider. It is achieved by registering an account on the Ramblers website. Chair thanked Webmaster for the hard work he'd put into producing the replacement website. A previous Chair added her appreciation as the committee had started discussing such a move several years before but not made progress. So this update was most welcome. There was a request that with the use of social media the web was not overlooked. Chair noted that Newsletters are being posted on the web and Webmaster commented that social media icons on the web page are to enable re-posts from the web to social media. In answer to a question about access to the group's OS account, Chair said that walk leaders should email her to obtain the login details.

h. Treasurer

Accounts: 1st October, 2017 to 30th September, 2018

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
01/10/17	Balance brought forward			255.00
30/10/17	Cotswold voucher for prize at AGM.	20.00		235.00
31/10/17	Income from Walking Partnership, Ramblers Holidays.		40.00	275.00
01/11/17	Area Funding received.		123.50	398.50
13/11/17	Payment for hire of hall for AGM.	63.00		335.50
14/02/18	Walk leader encouragement prizes at AGM.	54.14		281.36
02/03/18	Area Funding received.		123.50	404.86
20/03/18	Group subscription for online OS maps.	70.00		334.86
30/04/18	Income from Walking Partnership, Ramblers Holidays.		20.00	354.86
30/09/18	Balance carried forward			354.86

- Annual return submitted to Area.
- Group allocation for 2018/2019: standard group formula to be applied.

With the increase of almost £100 in the balance over the year, it was asked whether there were plans to spend the funds. Chair replied that there were none at present and that Area was experiencing a similar situation and had requested ideas for projects.

4. Walk leaders draw

Each walk led earned an entry into a draw (plus a bonus one for first walk). The winner received a £20 voucher to spend at Cotswold Outdoor. Small gifts were also given to the leaders who led the most walks and the greatest total number of miles, and to three people for leading their first walks.

5. Stand down of current Committee

6. Election of new Committee

- Chair: Helen Barham re-elected
- Secretary: Kevin Hessey
- Walks Programme Secretary: Pam Cartledge
- Membership Secretary: Nicola Copeman re-elected
- Group Representative to Area Executive: Nicola Copeman re-elected
- Social Secretary: Anna Gillespie re-elected
- Webmaster: Dave Flitney re-elected
- Treasurer: Devinder Sivia re-elected
- Publicity officer (currently covered by committee): vacant
- Without portfolio: Graciela Iglesias Rogers, Ian Macpherson, Richard Twine (re-elected)

Thank you gifts were given to the ex-Programme Secretary for 4 years in post and the ex-Secretary for 3 years in post (+3 on committee).

7. 10th Anniversary celebrations

2019 marks the 10th anniversary of the official establishment of Oxon Weekend Walkers and it was agreed that we should celebrate the occasion, probably in the form of a walk and meal held in May. The Plough at Wolvercote could be a suitable venue.

8. Oxford Orbital

The Oxford Orbital is a 25-mile circuit around Oxford which two members of the group lead every five years. It will take place early October 2019.

9. Any other business

It was asked whether the call forwarding system had to be switched to the new leader manually. Webmaster responded that automatic operation was not possible. Programme Secretary normally makes the change with Webmaster as back-up. A leader can be contacted only within the week preceding the walk and only to a single number. So on the rare occasion that there are two walks, only one leader can receive enquiries.

End of meeting