

Oxon Weekend Walkers AGM - 4pm Sunday 21st November 2021

The Plough, Wolvercote

MINUTES

1. Apologies received from Peter R. Nineteen members present.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 8th November 2020 were accepted.

3. Reports from current Committee

3a. Chair

Our last AGM was on Sunday 8th Nov via zoom as we had just started another COVID lockdown on Nov 1st 2020.

We will be hearing the reports from committee members of the group's activities during the last 12 months however here is a brief calendar of Oxon WW during another year dominated by this terrible pandemic.

From Nov to early December only 2 people were allowed to meet for exercise, so it was a time for recces and private walks with friends from the group.

During December our group walks could resume, WW decided that our walk leaders could decide number limits using our booking system, This meant we often had two or even three walks on a Sunday, and an extra workload for Pam our Walks Programme manager.

Our first ever Christmas Day walk (around Woodstock and Blenheim) provided an alternative for 9 of us who were unable to meet friends and family due to the COVID restrictions.

During Jan, Feb and March we were again in a tough lockdown that restricted all group walks so we were back to private walks for just two people.

During this period Quizzes charades and even scattergories provided a substitute to meeting on walks and many thanks to Lyn and Nicola for so much entertainment.

With many COVID Restrictions being eased on March 29th it meant that we could resume group walks although again with restricted numbers using the booking system which often meant multiple walks on a Sunday and an increased workload again for Pam.

For walk leaders, using this booking system and being able to restrict the numbers encouraged many of us to offer walks.

By June some walk leaders were happy to allow larger groups and on June 6th Mary S hosted a walk for over 20 from Chipping Norton our largest group walk for over 15 months.

By mid August walk leaders had the option to start "no need to book just turn up" and many walks since then have been on that basis, but still with the option for walk leaders to use the booking system.

So in summary, my personal thanks go to the committee, the walk leaders and all the individuals on the walks but especially to Pam who has taken on so much extra work to keep us all going during such a difficult period.

3b. Walks Programme Secretary

- Amazingly, despite everything this year, including a hard lock-down of several months, we delivered around 64 walks - more than in the previous year, and the total number of miles walked in the year was over 648 miles.
- Our walks provided places for over 589 individuals, whilst many are the same regulars, this is still a fantastic achievement.
- We have had groups of all sizes, everything from just 2 to 4, and then as we removed restrictions we got back to larger numbers of more than 21. The larger groups came as a bit of a surprise as we were not used to them, so well done to Mary and Carolyn for managing things so well for those first few.
- We've had some great walks – thanks to the 19 (21 if you count couples) different walk leaders who volunteered walks. We know its not been easy and with the various additional safety measures we've had to put in place. Just getting to grips with them (risk assessments, bookings etc) has been a challenge - particular thanks go to those regularly offering this year – Lyn, Mary, Kevin & Sheila, Ian and others.
- The walk leader leading the most walks this year goes to Lyn with 9+ walks including our first ever early riser starting at 6.00 to see what nature had to offer the early birds. We did get a little more than we bargained for with some very wet boots some serious sock-swapping in the woods
- It was great to see Peter leading his first walk, and we're looking forward to his next one.
- We had our first Christmas day walk- really appreciated by all.
- We had three evening walks too - great to make the most of the longer summer days after a day at work
- It is nice that several of you have continued to post your walking pictures, all helping promote our walks as well as inspiring others

Thanks to everyone who walked with us over the year – for welcoming and including others, keeping the conversations going, for sharing you knowledge of the countryside, for all the cow-whispering, bird-spotting, for some great debates, and generally keeping spirits up and helping us all enjoy ourselves every single Sunday.

3c. Membership Secretary

As Membership Secretary I answer email inquiries from potential new walkers and try to encourage new walkers to join our group. I also send an email to welcome the new members and to give information how to sign up for our Facebook group.

When a new walker shows up for a walk, I am always pleased to see the warm welcome that we give. I think many of us remember how it feels to be a new person joining an established group of friends; hoping that someone will make the effort to talk. It is credit to our members that so many new walkers do decide to join, given that they survive the ordeal of their first outing!

Thank you all for supplying that warm welcome.

During the pandemic, our membership numbers have stayed pretty constant at about 140. Since lockdown ended, we are gradually increasing our membership and now have 148 members. At a meeting held by the Area Committee in July, the Area Membership Officer reported that in the Oxfordshire area the membership numbers were up by 1.7% and our figure at that time was an increase of 5.4%. We were the second highest in the county following West Oxfordshire who had an impressive 11.4% increase.

On a wider scale, Ramblers nationally suffered a steady decline in membership prior to 2019. During the pandemic the loss and gain of members was approximately balanced but since the end of lockdown there has been some growth. Ramblers are now investing in a range of channels including Facebook and Google and are attempting an “always on” approach to recruitment which I think means that rather than focusing on individual events such as Countryfile Live, they are always actively present. An example might be that when people use a search engine to find a walk, the Ramblers should be more likely to feature in the search, with their walks programme and local walks on offer.

Ramblers are also promising investment in a new brand, new website and new data base plus new investment including a “self-guided walking offer”.

So, to summarise. We remain a strong group with a steady membership.

3d. Group Representative to the Area Executive

The Area Committee meets every three months to discuss issues raised by Ramblers nationally, and in the Oxfordshire area. There is a representative from every walking group and a committee with the usual roles of treasurer, membership, walks programme, footpath warden and secretary and chairman. We used to meet in Kidlington but have been doing ZOOM meetings since COVID-19 struck. I feel that the ZOOM meetings work well and tend to be an efficient way of dealing with the issues raised.

Recently, there has been much discussion about membership recruitment and the return of the walks booklet which many of the other Oxfordshire groups used to publicise their walks programme. We opted out of this system some years ago preferring a more accessible online approach as most of our members use the internet.

At committee meetings, we share ideas between the different groups and discuss topics such as path maintenance, the requirements of risk assessments, finance, walking festivals, and issues such

as the “don’t lose your way” survey. Ramblers head office use the Area meetings to pass on any information and liaise with the different areas.

There are plans to resume the Area annual picnic meeting in the summer. At this event, all the Oxfordshire groups organise walks to all converge on a picnic site so there is a big social lunchtime gathering of Ramblers. Each group takes a turn to host. I think it is Henley and Goring who are due to host the next picnic.

The next Area AGM is on January 22nd 2022 at Wootton and Dry Sandford village hall. There is normally a walk in the morning followed by an afternoon meeting. Everyone is welcome to attend.

3e. Social Secretary

I would like to start with a big thank you to Lyn, Nicola and Ian for organising events so that OWW members could get together virtually when face-to-face meetings were not possible.

After last year’s AGM we headed for an uncertain Christmas season, but OWW still provided festive entertainment starting with Nicola’s Christmas drinks and quiz on 12th December. Then, after Ian’s sunny Christmas day walk and as Oxfordshire descended to Tier 4, she hosted a game of charades.

The New Year brought our second lockdown and Lyn stepped in to lift the group’s mood and maintain its connectedness with two virtual events each month taking us right through from those gloomy winter months to May Day. Lyn brought us a creative mixture of diversely themed quizzes and games.

Perhaps we haven’t yet felt confident enough to schedule our traditional socials but let’s hope that in 2022 we’re sufficiently boosted for those to return.

Social Events 2020 – 2021

Date	Type	Event	Organiser	Number (approx.)
12th Dec 20	Quiz & social	Christmas Quiz and Drinks	Ian & Nicola	17
26th Dec 20	Game	Boxing Day Charades	Nicola	9
9th Jan 21	Quiz	Quiz	Lyn	26
21st Jan 21	Game	Would I Lie to You	Lyn & Nicola	11
6 th Feb 21	Quiz	World Geography	Lyn	22
21 st Feb 21	Game	Charades	Lyn	8
6 th Mar 21	Quiz	Smile	Lyn	17
21 st Mar 21	Game	Scattergories	Lyn	13
3 rd Apr 21	Quiz	Spring	Lyn	14
1 st May 21	Quiz	May Day – Living Things	Lyn	8

3f. Webmaster

Dave F is happy to continue as Webmaster but is unable to attend the AGM.

3g. Treasurer

Ramblers Association: Oxon Weekend Walkers (OX40)

Accounts: 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
01/10/2020	Balance brought forward			£377.36
26/10/2020	Ramblers funding		£110.50	£487.86
28/10/2020	Income from walking partnership with Ramblers Holidays		£10.00	£497.86
29/01/2021	Cotswolds voucher for prize at AGM	£40.00		£457.86
18/02/2021	Ordnance Survey subscription	£100.00		£357.86
18/02/2021	Zoom subscription	£14.39		£343.47
15/04/2021	Zoom subscription	£28.78		£314.69
26/04/2021	IT expenses	£60.02		£254.67
10/05/2021	Ramblers funding		£110.50	£365.17
31/08/2021	Business cards, post cards	£36.85		£328.32
30/09/2021	Balance carried forward			£328.32

Notes

- 1) Zoom subscription was taken out for the lockdown period and has now been ceased.
- 2) Possible further IT/communications costs due to Dave F.
- 3) Group allocation for 2021/22: standard group formula (£228.00)
- 4) Independent examination of accounts carried out by Louise S.
- 5) Bank signatories: Peter R, Kevin H.

4. Walk Leaders draw

Each walk led earned one entry into a draw for an e gift voucher. Name drawn from a hat to receive the voucher was Tim.

A thank you prize was also presented to Lyn for leading the most walks and to Peter for leading his first walk.

5. Stand down of current Committee

6. Election of new Committee

Post	Candidate	Proposer	Second
Chair	Ian M	Pam	Kevin
Area Rep	Nicola C	Laura	Kerry
Walks	Pam C	Nicola	Kevin
Social	Lyn R	Jane	Kevin
Webmaster	Dave F	Ian	Kerry
Membership	Nicola C	Ian	Vanessa
Publicity	Vacant		
Treasurer	Peter R	Kerry	Vanessa
Secretary	Kevin H	Carolyn	Lyn
W/O Portfolio 1	Jane P	Sheena	Carolyn
W/O Portfolio 2	Laura T	Sheena	Carolyn
W/O Portfolio 3	Vacant		

The new committee was accepted. It was noted that the vacant positions could be filled during the year if volunteers came forward.

7. AOB

None

End of meeting 4.40pm.