

MINUTES of the 37th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Zoom Meeting* Wednesday 4 November at 7pm

***In order to comply with government guidelines as well as to meet the needs of our members, this AGM was dealt with in three parts. Firstly, reports were emailed using MailChimp. A second mailing comprised a voting slip giving members the opportunity to register a vote on minutes of the last AGM, matters arising and the election of officers and committee, including the Auditor. There was also space and opportunity to add comments. A Zoom meeting was the third part of this AGM.**

Zoom participants: Bill and Maralyn Becher; Eric and Janet Evans; Arthur and Sally Cole; Bob and Nicky Ward; Julian Fisher; Jenny Brewster; Dorothy Webley; Celia Broom; Margaret Bradshaw; Val Rose; Chris Tasker; Trevor and Judy Fine; George Coles; Keith Rossiter; Liz Emerson; Robert Woolcott; Bernard Parker; Tessa Smith (23)

WELCOME

Chairman Eric opened the meeting by welcoming all members and a warm welcome was extended to the Honorary President Robert Woolcott and to George Coles from Devon Area.

MINUTES OF THE 36TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of last year's meeting had been on the website for 12 months and there were no questions.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising and the minutes were acknowledged to be a true record of the meeting, to be signed off.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – A REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Chairman started by saying that despite the difficulties of 2020, there had been plenty of activity and a good number of objectives had been achieved. Holidays to the Lake District and Pembrokeshire had had to be cancelled, as had the Christmas Dinner, but when we were allowed, informal 'bubble' walks had been enjoyed by those who were not shielding, all the more fun for not being as carefully recced as usual. Eric thanked Walks Co-ordinator, Nicky Ward, for putting together a walks programme as soon as it was permitted, no easy task with several of our key walks leaders out of action. He went on to remind

members of the booking system introduced to comply with the government guidelines. At the time of the AGM of course, all led walks had been cancelled until further notice.

Further thanks were extended to Verity Vass who, having co-ordinated the Oh So Easy walks for many years, was stepping down. Janet Evans had agreed to taking on this work.

Eric pointed to the wonderful photographs posted by members on to the Facebook pages as something that had lightened what could have been a dark period.

The project to walk the South West Coast Path (SWCP) had also been affected by the restrictions. With the focus shifted for the winter months from North Devon to East Devon and Dorset, SDR had managed to complete the Exmouth to Seatown section, raising the total of miles walked to 88 and with another 10 miles squeezed in at Plymouth just before the second lockdown came into play, it meant that 14% of the total distance had been covered.

As we were unable to undertake our usual SWCP Challenge this year Val Rose had suggested members might like to walk a local section of the coast path during the winter lockdown and donate £1 for every mile walked.

SDR has taken on a new responsibility in adopting and agreeing to monitor the Ashburton to Bovey Tracey section of the newly launched Dartmoor Way. Eric referred members to a link on the SDR website and Facebook pages. The walking festival associated with the launch has now been re-scheduled for May 2021

THE TREASURER'S REPORT

For the benefit of new members, the Chairman explained the different headings: Main, Self-Financing, the Dr M Mason and the John Musgrave legacies and a slide was shown recording the balances in each.

The Main account showed a balance of £774.49, marginally higher than the recommended percentage of annual expenditure.

The Self-Financing section of the accounts covers social events and holidays and here a small balance is needed to cover deposits for holidays and future events. The balance stands at £1,511.54

After the purchase of some Hi-Viz jackets, the Dr Mason Legacy stands at £41.95

The John Musgrave Legacy shows £23,359.85. The major expenditure incurred this year has been signage for the redirected route around Coffinswell.

Questions were invited and the Treasurer, Celia Broom, was participating online ready to address any questions. There were none raised.

At this point Chairman Eric Evans invited George Coles to comment. George felt there was nothing to add other than to point out what a big job it is for our Treasurer Celia Broom and he urged us to 'look after her'. Celia was assured, we all value her highly, she is indeed a *treasured* Treasurer!

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2020

From Central Office the membership numbers have averaged 232 during the last year. As at September 2020 the membership stands at 234, this is 5 fewer than the September 2019 level.

The average number of walkers on walks is 4.1 fewer than the previous year.

A slide showed the average number of walkers out on the various days.

The average number of walkers was lower this year for all days. The lower numbers were the result of the very wet winter weather and the Covid-19 pandemic.

A total of 138 individuals walked at some time during the year, of which 95 were associated by Central Office to South Devon Ramblers.

Of the list of members from Central Office 41% have walked at least once during the last year.

Eight walks had been cancelled during the year, for storms, high winds and heavy rain.

The total miles covered by people on all the walks was 7,706 miles. This is the equivalent of walking nearly a third of the way around the equator.

LOST WAYS

Bob Ward gave a summary of the Don't Lose Your Way project, reminding members we have until 2026 to register undocumented rights of way (PRoW). He explained the three part process of identification, investigation and documenting and alluded to the Lost Ways map now on the Ramblers website.

Some figures were cited: of the 49,000 paths identified as possible 'lost ways', 9,210 miles of these were in the South West and nearly 2,949 in Devon alone.

Next steps entailed checking to see how volunteers would be able to get involved, researching historic evidence and submitting applications to local authorities ahead of the 2026 deadline in order to get the most useful paths restored to the map.

JOHN MUSGRAVE HERITAGE TRAIL (JMHT)

The JMHT Officer, Bob Ward reported over 1,000 hits on the JMHT website pages in the last year and while the number of booklets distributed, 25, is much lower, this was attributed to the preference for using the online route guidance.

The monitoring of the Trail, now biannual, had been duly completed and all repairs undertaken, averaging about one per month. Monitors were thanked for their valued contribution.

Bob had engaged the Greenway ferryman to refill the pamphlet holder down by Greenway Quay.

Three new road traffic signs had been installed by Devon County Council at Milber and Coffinswell, this completing the rerouted section.

ELECTIONS

TS thanked all those 43 members who had registered their vote through one of the communication channels made available. Officers and members of the 2019/20 committee were all duly and unanimously re-elected for a further year.

TS explained that nominations had not been actively sought this year but emphasized that expressions of interest from volunteers were always welcome. As there is currently no policy in the constitution for recruitment to the committee, a policy was being developed for 2021 so that guidelines would be available. She stressed the importance of being able to attract volunteers as necessary.

TS reminded members that the committee was listed both on the printed walks programme and on the SDR website.

George Coles had generously agreed to serve as Auditor for another year and he was thanked.

PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR – ONCE GUIDELINES ALLOW

- Continue with a full walks programme including the resumption of the SWCP project which has been included. The pre-booking system is likely to stay in place.
- Look forward to social events in 2021
- Promote Well Being including walks using public transport to help more people get out and enjoy the benefits of walking
- Engage with younger people – if allowed, organise another Family Ramble
- Lead walks for the Dartmoor Way walking festival in May
- Lake District Holiday provisionally booked for September 2021
- Contribute to the Don't Lose Your Way campaign

QUESTIONS were invited:

Bernard P felt the re-appointment of the committee en bloc should show a proposer and seconder. The Chairman pointed out the rationale for this being very much a streamlined version of our usual practice; Julian F explained that The Charities Commission and the Regulator were adopting a flexible, pragmatic approach during these extraordinary times. The votes showed unanimity in favour of the committee being re-elected with no 'NO' votes. Nevertheless, the re-election of the committee en bloc was proposed by Trevor F and seconded by Arthur C.

Bernard P questioned the deadline for the Lost Ways. It was understood that an extension of 5 years was being sought by Ramblers.

Were volunteers required to assist with Don't Lose Your Way project at local level?

Following discussion, it was agreed that Ramblers were best placed to co-ordinate the response to Stage 2 investigation, and that SDR would be guided by Central Office.

AOB

There was no other business.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking committee for their hard work over the last year and for their commitment and enthusiasm going forward. He also thanked the membership for leading walks, back-marking, coming out on walks, attending social events and generally supporting the committee during these difficult times.

A toast was raised by the Committee to all members of South Devon Ramblers.

end
