



# MINUTES OF THE 40<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH DEVON RAMBLERS

Held at the Livermead House Hotel, Torquay

on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

## 1. Welcome, Apologies and housekeeping.

Eric Evans, Chairman, welcomed all to the 40<sup>th</sup> AGM and read the 17 apologies (appendix i). He thanked Julian F for compiling the slideshow and Lesley and Mike W for creating one (at very short notice) regarding the SW Coast Path Project. Details of fire exits were provided on the screen, as were the agenda, accounts summary and synopses of presentations to follow.

## 2. Matters Arising

Karen stated the only matter arising from the 2021 meeting was the suggestion of an earlier start time for Sunday walks. This has been taken up as a trial for the winter programme. It will be reviewed, feedback welcomed.

## 3. Officer Reports

### **Chairman – Eric Evans**

As this is the 40<sup>th</sup> AGM, Eric began by recalling the formation of the South Devon Ramblers in 1982, originally to be called the Torbay Ramblers Group. There was already a Torbay Rambling Club formed in 1950, so the name 'South Devon Ramblers' was chosen. A few of the early members remain and Robert Woolcott, Honorary President remembered the very early walks.

Eric stated that the Committee had worked hard over the year and each Officer would provide an individual update. The financial and membership situation remained stable thanks to Celia B and Dorothy W, Karen had slotted in well to the secretarial role, Nicky had once again created a full winter walks



programme, Bob continued his hard work on the John Musgrave Trail and footpath issues as well as the Don't Lose Your Way project. Val, Paddy and Janet were thanked for providing an interesting and excellent programme of social events following the Covid restrictions of the previous two years, and Julian for his support with the website and the slideshow presentation this evening.

- April-May - The Dartmoor Way Launch was very successful. The SDR supported three walks.
- The mini-break in Pembrokeshire last May, including visits to St. Davids and Tenby, was also mentioned and thanks given to Bob W for excellent organisation.
- The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event – both meal and walk were well attended. Feedback from members was very positive and the SDR profile raised with articles in several publications, including Walk Magazine. Mention was made of Robert Woolcott, our Honorary President and the excellent cake, that he cut on the day. Thanks were expressed to the Berry Head Hotel for the arrangements and meal.
- The Lake District trip – twice cancelled. Eric was pleased to say it had been very successful, the accommodation was excellent, our coach driver highly competent and flexible and credit given to Bob W, Richard B and Lesley – a local fell runner - for leading the walks. Appreciation was also offered for the weather, which showcased the Lakes at their best.
- SWCP – The project continues, thanks conveyed to Arthur C for initiating it and his input organising the walks, unfortunately he is not able to walk as much lately and Ann P has stepped in to help organise, along with Lesley and Mike W. (presentation to follow).
- Eric mentioned an incident last summer and the help given by Mike and Lesley W when his fall necessitated medical assistance. He confirmed a donation had been made to North Dartmoor Search and Rescue and that the attention received on the day ensured a swift recovery.
- Finally, Eric reminded all of the SDR Walks protocol, which can be found in the Walks section, under 'Guidance for Walkers' on our website.



### **Treasurer – Celia Broom**

Celia took the floor and referred to the Club Accounts, summary copies of which had been distributed.

Income was buoyant in the main account at £364.24 helped by various sponsors. The self-funding account has a balance of £1,494.15 which is just within RA guidelines.

Social events were self-supporting with a few exceptions. Bank charges are applied when payments are made by cheque and totalled £16.20 this year.

The Dr. Mason legacy still has £41.95 credit and the JMH legacy has £22,846.

Celia was pleased to confirm George Coles has audited the accounts and is willing to do so again for a further year.

### **Membership Secretary – Dorothy Webley**

Dorothy confirmed the current membership total was 230, 16 down on the 246 of last year.

Of the 231 who have walked this year, 111 were associated to SDR, 48% have walked at least once.

For the first time 2 walks were cancelled due to heat!

13,679 miles had been covered which was half-way around the equator.

Since keeping records (13 years) Dorothy noted the group had walked around the world 8.5 times.

Dorothy provided the average number on walk days compared to last year, an increase overall.

|          | OCT 21 TO SEP 22 | OCT 20 TO SEP 21 |
|----------|------------------|------------------|
| SUNDAY   | 12.0             | 10.5             |
| THURSDAY | 19.2             | 18.9             |
| OSE      | 22.8             | 16.6             |
| TSW      | 10.4             | 13.0             |
|          |                  |                  |
| TOTAL    | 16.0             | 14.7             |



### **Secretary – Karen Howes**

Karen thanked the committee for their support in her learning curve, Tessa for the handover notes and being available for questions, and the membership for making her welcome.

She said she knew most faces in the room, having walked regularly over 2022.

For those that didn't know her she said she had been walking all over Devon for many years and had a great interest in its history. She was leading a History Tour of Exeter in April. If this is successful and there is interest, she hopes to lead one of Paignton in future, possibly next Autumn/late Summer.

Karen is also involved with the SDR website, supported by Matt and Julian and asked for a show of hands to gauge its use. It seems most members do check there for updates. The gallery is known to be slow, and Karen said she would continue to work on it and keep the Facebook page alive too, with reports and photos. She advised that cuttings of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publicity were available to view in the room.

Karen asked members to let her know by email of any queries, comments or general feedback if they wished, via the [secretary@southdevonramblers.com](mailto:secretary@southdevonramblers.com) address.

Finally, she thanked the Committee for their support and the hard work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure the Club runs smoothly and members are kept apprised of walks information and events.

### **Walks Coordinator – Nicky Ward**

Nicky advised that whilst we had a full programme for Winter/Spring, we have lost 8 experienced leaders, which amounts to at least 11 more walks needed each programme. She urged members to step up, if at all possible. This request was to be supported with a Leaders Training session, information to be cascaded in the Spring but it would be held at Nicky and Bob's home and include basic map reading, walk protocol and support to plan and lead a walk on the next programme.

A First Aid awareness course is also planned, details to follow from Paddy J.



Nicky confirmed the 10am Sunday walk start was being trialled to avoid both driving and walking in the dark during the winter months. It would not apply on Thursdays as those walks are generally shorter. It will be reviewed in due course.

Q – How close to a scheduled walk should a recce take place?

No timeline was specified by the RA, but it was advisable to recce within two weeks of the walk date. Most leaders recce twice, sometimes more to ensure mileage, route detail and timings work and near the day to double check for path closures, roadworks or other temporary incidents that may impact on getting to the walk or the route itself.

### **JMHT Officer, Footpath Officer & DLYW – Bob Ward**

Firstly, Bob referred to the John Musgrave Heritage Trail, having had some detailed and welcome feedback from someone who walked the whole trail over the summer. He has updated the routes, available on the website, and undertaken 9 repairs.

Three volunteers would be appreciated to monitor specific sections of the trail. Some interest has already been shown, please contact Bob if you are able to help, it only means checking the sections once or twice a year.

- Totnes to Berry Pomeroy Castle
- Cornworthy to Dittisham
- Great Hill to Milber

### **DLYW**

This project, initiated by the Ramblers Association is to recover almost 49,000 miles of paths across the Country that are in danger of being lost forever. Bob has attended meetings and confirms that the Government deadline to complete the work necessary by Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2026 is close to being rescinded.

More information here if you are interested

<https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/>



### **Social Events – Val Rose, Paddy Jewry & Janet Evans**

Val went through the events of the year now that Covid restrictions have ceased and said how nice it was to be 'active' again.

- Last December's Christmas Dinner at the Dainton Golf Club was enjoyed by everyone and the quality of the meal remarked upon.
- Fish Supper at Rockfish in February, with 'Missin' Tackle' providing music was very successful.
- As Eric had stated, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lunch/walk event was a huge success, attracting positive publicity for the Club. The venue, meal, presentations, and weather were all excellent on the day.
- Daniel led a lovely picnic walk in the hot summer which was also very enjoyable.
- Kayaking on the River Dart was popular and a lovely day had in the sunshine again.
- The recent Gin Experience in Plymouth, combined with lunch was another success.
- This year's Christmas Lunch will be at the Livermead Cliff Hotel (across the road!) and there are still places available. Closing date 25<sup>th</sup> November. £25.50 pp. Please contact Jackie M or Janet E.

Val invited questions and said the Social Committee are always open to suggestions for events, or for members to organise events which they can support.

Events in the early planning stage for next year include a talk and supper at the Berry Head Hotel regarding the Brixham Heritage Railway project; an evening meal at the Crab & Hammer, and a visit to a cider factory.

Paddy is also organising the First Aid Awareness Course, thanks to Tricia's support with the venue, the Yacht Club. Details to be available in the New Year, check the Events tab on our website.

Next Christmas an evening dinner dance is being planned.

ICE (in case of emergency) Cards were discussed, and all walkers should carry one, as an incident this year demonstrated they are essential if medical



services are called. Some have been made available in plastic-wallets, more can be obtained or downloaded from the Ramblers website.

Jackie Mann was thanked for her continuing input in producing excellent flyers and taking on the organisation for this year's Christmas lunch.

#### 4. Election of Officers

To start the process, Karen confirmed that Eric is willing to stand as Chairman for a further year and that no nominations had been received from members, prior to the AGM, as is the requirement.

Officers were, therefore, duly elected as illustrated:

| <b><u>Officer and Role</u></b>                                         | <b><u>Proposer</u></b> | <b><u>Second</u></b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Eric E - Chairman                                                      | Dorothy W              | Verity V             |
| Celia B - Treasurer                                                    | Verity V               | Linda L              |
| Dorothy W - Membership Secretary                                       | John W                 | Kate McC             |
| Karen H - Secretary                                                    | Hilary B               | Vicky H              |
| Paddy J - Social Committee                                             | Jackie M               | Sue W                |
| Janet E - Social Committee                                             | Dorothy W              | Chris W              |
| Val R - Social Committee                                               | Dorothy W              | Bob W                |
| Nicky W - Walks Coordinator                                            | Val R                  | Chris T              |
| Bob W - Footpath & JMHT Officer                                        | Dorothy W              | Chris N              |
| <b>All proposals carried unanimously by a membership show of hands</b> |                        |                      |

#### 5. South West Coast Path Project

Following Arthur Cole's departure from the Project Eric was pleased to advise that Ann Piggot has taken it on. Lesley created a presentation using Ann's data to update members on progress.

Approximately 240 miles walked in the last 12 months (Nov – Oct)

445 (of the 630) miles completed in total. The longest walk, 14.73 miles, Baggy Point to Barnstaple.

The highest ascent 3968ft, Widemouth to Boscastle, (7 climbs) just over 14 miles. The flattest walk, 62ft ascent, Barnstaple to Bideford, 12 miles.

Devon is now complete!

There are a few day trips planned throughout the winter months to complete some 'relatively' closer-to-home walks (in Cornwall and Dorset).



We also plan to have 2 mini breaks, based in Penzance, in March and April, to complete the more distant sections in Cornwall.

We will then have 55 miles left of Dorset.

Hopefully the SWCP will be complete for most of the group by summer 2023!

Eric thanked Lesley and Mike for their input, as well as Ann Piggot for organising the walks and the efforts made by all the SWCP Group to date.

## 6. Future Plans

### Club Holidays – Bob W

Bob is hoping to offer a trip abroad for SDRC members in 2023.

The Emerald Coast, Portugal is the suggestion and Bob presented a slideshow of his proposal.

Fly Bristol to Porto

7 nights in 4 Star hotel in Vila Praia de Âncora

Breakfast and Dinner (wine included)

5 days of walking plus one free day

2 guided walks each day at Grades 4 and 6

All transportation included - coach to Bristol Airport if take-up sufficient at small extra cost

Dates – 23<sup>rd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Approximate Cost **£1315pp (shared room) & £1490 single**

A show of hands was requested and around 19 expressed interest, enough for Bob to take this forward. Deposits may be required early to secure flight and hotel rooms. Flyer to be available on the website shortly



### Other Plans

- A short walking break, probably around 8<sup>th</sup> May, in the UK .
- Walk the Templer Way – (route of the first railway in the UK, built by George Templer in 1820 to transport granite from the quarries on Dartmoor) The walk runs from Haytor to Teignmouth and will be done in sections, with transport organised.
- Walk Leader training in the Spring
- First Aid Awareness - venue and time to be advised

### 7. Any Other Business

Comment was invited from the membership. There were no queries or issues of concern. Eric thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm.

KSH/SDR Nov22

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### Appendix (i)

## Apologies Received

= 17

|                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Paddy Jewry       | Louise Stevens   |
| Gail Johnson      | Bill Becher      |
| Peter Screech     | Marilyn Becher   |
| Ann Piggot        | Dr Rowena French |
| Dorothy Jefferson | John Cornhill    |
| Bob Alford        | Grace Salvador   |
| Margaret Alford   | Gordon Wight     |
| Brian Swann       | David Meldrum    |
| Tessa Smith       |                  |