



Chairman's annual report

Membership. We have 315 members with those leaving being matched by new members joining.

Walks Programme. We continue to offer four walks per week, Tuesdays, and Saturdays 6 to 7 miles, Thursdays, and Sundays 10 to 12 miles. We have not offered Wednesday evening walks this year as there was little take up last year. There have been occasional gaps in the walking programme due to a lack of walk leaders. The online system of notifying members of upcoming walks and booking on to walks (when required) is working well. In common with many other Rambler Groups, we do not plan to revert to a printed programme as the online system is very efficient and significantly cheaper.

Walk leaders. We currently have 17 walk leaders; we do need more to prevent over reliance on the few and I encourage all members to volunteer to lead occasional walks to spread the workload. The introduction of the long-awaited online Walks Manager system to replace GWEM has finally arrived, Walk Leaders can now upload details of their planned walks directly on to the Ramblers Website for checking and approval by the Walks Co-ordinator.

RWP. The Right of Way Working parties continue to meet on alternate Fridays throughout the year, working through the parishes on a four-year cycle. The level of commitment from Fiona and Roy and their team of volunteers is outstanding and unequalled by most other Rambler Groups in Berkshire.

Gate Installations. A team of 10 volunteers led by Graham Smith continue to undertake the essential task of replacing old stiles with new pedestrian gates. Currently we are running at a rate of 10 to 12 installations per year and as of the last installation on the 6th October we had completed 326 installations.

The Power Tool Group was not called out until late summer this year. Members have undertaken path clearance under the supervision of a West Berkshire Ranger and remain ready and willing to attend when called upon by West Berkshire Council

First Aid training. Twelve Walks Leaders completed a day's First Aid Training on Saturday 18th February. First Aid training is not compulsory for walk leaders but is recommended. The cost of training was met by the Ramblers Area Committee.

Coach Walks. We have held five successful Coach Walks this year. Marlow on 2nd April, organised by Dawn Tait. Lacock on 14th May organised by Richard Moore. Salisbury on 25th June organised by Richard Trimmer. Bath Skyline on 6th of August organised by myself and Winchester on 17th September organised by Shona Kelly and Neil Lawrence. Despite a significant increase in the cost of Coach Hire driving the ticket price up from £12 to £16 we were at or near capacity on each trip resulting in a profit of £480 as detailed in the accounts. I am delighted to report that Neil Lawrence has agreed to take over the role of Chair of the Coach Walk Committee and the Coach Walk Committee met on the 10th of October to plan next year's coach walk programme which will be.

7th April Stratford Upon Avon
19th May Christchurch
30th June Swanage
11th August Thame
22nd September St. Albans

Social activities have included

- BBQ held on Friday the 19th of May in Ramblers Woods.
- Ramblers Holiday to North Wales from the 11th to 15th June
- Canal boat trip on the Rose at Hungerford on the 21st June.

We are organising

- 'Thank you' meal, subsidised for the volunteers in our group, on 27th November, details TBC.
- Meal open to all members on 17th January, like this year's event held at the Kung Fu, details TBA.
- Picnic walks for members on 13th April next year
- Ramblers Walking holiday to Harrogate from 18th to 22nd June 2024.

Recruitment. Members of West Berkshire Ramblers attended the Wash Common Community Festival on the 9th of September deploying the Berkshire Area recruitment tent, giving away pens, badges, leaflets, and encouragement to join the Ramblers. We also used for the first time our two recently acquired West Berkshire Ramblers Feather Flags to advertise our presence and attract people to the recruitment tent.

Website. This has recently been renewed by our Web Master Steve Collins, with the help of IT support so that it now runs on the latest Joomla 4 software, with improved functionality and easy to use screens. The revamp has resulted in a meeting to review all the pages that are displayed and a removal of old information.

Committee. Sue Trimmer who has been a superb Walks Coordinator, is standing down and the role of Walks Coordinator is being taken up by Sian Williams. The rest of the committee have indicated they are willing to stand again. I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Sue Trimmer and to all the committee members for their tireless and dedicated work.

The Committee Members are: -

Walk Co-ordinators Sue Trimmer and from now on Sian Williams,
Membership Secretaries Robin Clugston and John Gardner,
Treasurer Jayne Kirk,
Committee Secretary Gill Lawrence,
Social Activities Co-ordinator Shona Kelly
Footpath Officer Neal Pike
Environmental Officer Graham Smith
Publicity Officer Richard Trimmer
Web Master Steve Collins

In November 2000 I undertook to be Chair for three years. In the absence of another volunteer for the role I am prepared to continue for one more year however I need to make it clear that I will be standing down at the AGM in 2024, please don't hesitate to let me have your nominations for yourself or another member to join the committee.

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