

## **Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of SOUTH DEVON RAMBLERS held on Wed 7 November at the Redcliffe Hotel, Paignton**

- **Welcome and apologies**

Apologies received from Margaret English; Don Cockman; David Meldrum; Wendy Coote; Mike and Marilyn O'Donnell.

Chairman Bernard Parker welcomed all and thanked members for their continuing support.

59 people attended.

- **Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting November 2017**

These were approved and signed as a true record of the meeting.

- **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

- **Chairman's Report**

Bernard (BP) commenced his report by underlining the fact that the AGM is the time not only to record events and achievements over the last 12 months, but also to recognize the good work done and he extended his thanks to all concerned.

He went on to summarise the steps taken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Using a slide he listed the **Achievements and Actions:**

Engagement with the Dartmoor Way Project.

Agreement to collaborate with Totnes Group on the Clapper Bridge Project.

Objection to Planning Application P/2017/1133, copies of which were made available.

The completion of a Membership Survey.

Careful control of finances in line with the new strategy on reserves by Central Office.

Completion of four sections of the Coleridge Way.

Retention of the membership base.

Continuing maintenance of the John Musgrave Heritage Trail (JMHT).

Planning of a flight holiday to Greece for 2019.

Support for the SWCP Challenge.

At this point a cheque for £205 was presented by Treasurer Celia Broom (CB) to the Director of the South West Coast Path Association, Julian Gray. Julian thanked everyone for their support and gave a short exposé of the SWCP which he said had hit their target of £40,000.

The finances for the year ending 30 September 2018 showed a figure of £941.83 in the main account. In the self-financing account there was £1950.72; in the John Musgrave legacy account £28,017.12 and the Dr Mike Mason account holds £373.79. In his point about the careful stewardship of the group's finances, Bernard explained the rationale for using some of the reserves in the Dartmoor Way and the Dartmoor Clapper Bridge Projects.

There were no questions about finances.

### **Membership**

Using slides, Val Rose showed that while membership remained more or less static at 250, the latest figures show a small increase. On average, compared to last year, there were slightly fewer members out on walks. Not all members are actively walking though 48% of members walked at least once over the year.

Only four walks were cancelled due to inclement weather. The group walked a total of 15,091 miles last year. It is estimated that over the last 9 years, South Devon Ramblers have walked the equivalent of 6.5 times round the world.

BP thanked all walk leaders, back markers and intermediate marshals as well as Walks Coordinator Eric Evans who had managed to fill the walks programs despite several regular leaders being out of action.

- **Survey 2018**

Bob Ward presented the result of the survey 2018 illustrating the results\* with slides.

*\*The presentation is available on the website for closer scrutiny.*

He repeatedly asked the members for views, eliciting extra views including:

People seemed not to object to travelling an hour to a walk start but it was pointed out that for those living in Brixham, this usually meant well over the hour and was a factor in deciding whether or not to go.

Bob's suggestion to spread the types of walk to reflect the popularity would need to be tempered by what leaders offered.

There was some interest in walking the Templer Way again 2019 (10 votes)

A few expressed interest in doing the Abbots Way 2019

The length of trips is likely to be determined by the schedules of the various transport providers.

For the Lake District holiday, it was felt that a week would be about right. Members were not averse to the idea of flights but expressed a preference for local airports if possible.

Some people were deterred by long coach journeys (4).

Mini Breaks: for 2 people weekends were out; for 6 people it has to be a weekend but the majority were happy with either weekdays or weekends.

There was considerable interest (18) in the SouthWest Coast Path as a project. Julian Gray offered help with itineraries.

There were few votes for a cave experience!

There was strong support for evening walks.

Bernard thanked Bob for the time he had taken with the questionnaire on top of his excellent work maintaining footpaths, repairing or modifying signage where necessary.

Bernard also paid tribute to the retiring JMHT Officer, Keith Probert. Keith has worked tirelessly to progress issues such as the Deer Park/Milber Road crossing, as well as the Kennels Road crossing. His initiative to implement a monitoring scheme on the JMHT means he leaves committee with the Trail clearly in a much better state and with a strategy to secure its future. The team doing this valuable work were also thanked.

- **Social Activities**

Val Rose thanked Paddy Jewry and Jackie Mann for their valued input and expressed her satisfaction that the range of activities showed a strong correlation with the preferences as stated in the survey.

Slides illustrated the canoe trip on the river Dart and Val mentioned the other successful social activities which had been enjoyed over the past 12 months: the talk on estuaries and coasts of the AONB; a memorial walk on the Templer Way; a tapas evening; a First Aid workshop and the forthcoming Christmas lunch.

Additionally Val announced that a sum of £141.50 was raised for The Big Ramble Children in Need appeal.

- **Future Objectives**

Bernard listed the objectives for the coming year as follows:

- To progress both the Deer Park Lane issue and the Dartmoor Clapper Bridge project, the latter in partnership with Totnes Ramblers.

- To consider as far as possible the results of the Survey 2018 in the planning of activities.

- To repeat the Survey in 2019.

- To maintain the level of membership.

- To Increase the number of walk leaders.

- To complete the Coleridge Way Project.

- To continue to support Ramblers campaigns and initiatives.

- **Devon Area Chairman: Andrew Chadwick**

The Area Chairman outlined the work of Area Council and gave some indication of the state of the organization at Head Office. He spoke optimistically about the future of Ramblers and was very positive about its leadership. He was also complimentary about South Devon Ramblers as a group, seeing it to be positive, enthusiastic and well-organized.

Bernard was presented with a framed certificate for his outstanding contribution to walking. The certificate was signed by Kate Ashbrook, Chair of the Board of Trustees. This

recognition was felt to be well deserved and it was accepted with characteristic grace and modesty.

At this point in the meeting, Bernard stepped down as Chairman and the elections began.

- Elections

<b>POST</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>PROPOSER</b>	<b>SECONDER</b>
Chairman	<b>Eric Evans</b>	Tessa Smith	Bob Alford
Secretary	<b>Tessa Smith</b>	Richard Eastment	Reg Tarling
Treasurer	<b>Celia Broom</b>	Diana Offler	Dorothy Webley
*Footpath Officer	<b>Bob Ward</b>	John Williams	Keith Probert
*JMHT Officer	<b>Bob Ward</b>	John Williams	Keith Probert
(* these roles to be combined)			
Membership Secretary	<b>Dorothy Webley</b>	Tessa Smith	Kate McCormack
Holiday Co-ordinator	<i>this post will be temporarily covered by the committee</i>		
Social Committee	<b>Val Rose</b>	Jackie Mann	Arthur Cole
	<b>Paddy Jewry</b>	Dorothy Webley	Verity Vass
<i>additionally</i>	<b>Janet Evans</b>	Val Rose	Verity Vass
**Walks Coordinator	<b>Eric Evans</b>	Diana Offler	Trish Walker
(** Eric to continue to fill this role with support from committee until new appointment made)			
Independent examiner	<b>George Coles</b>	Bernard Parker	Paddy Jewry

Eric Evans thanked members for supporting his nomination and pointed out that although he had big shoes to fill, he would give it his best!

- Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting was closed by the new Chairman at 8.30pm