

Minutes of the 2024 Valley Walkers AGM

Sunday 3rd November 2024 at 2:00 pm at Old Warden Village Hall

Present: Bob Wallace (Chair), Roger McLeod (Vice Chair and Programme Secretary), Tom Collier (Publicity Officer), Fran Stedman (General Secretary), Derek Turner (Footpath Officer), Brian Roe (Treasurer), Roy Carter (Membership Secretary), Tony Sheward (Independent Examiner) and 18 members (**see Attachment**)

Apologies: Jan Wolfarth (Walks Coordinator), Bernard and Mary Morse, Shaun Atkins, Karen and Tony Ashby, Mandy Wisson.

1. Minutes of the 2023 AGM held on 5th November 2023

The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Matters arising

a) £500 had been put into the 2024-2025 IVW Budget for replacement discs for the North Beds Heritage Trail.

Chair's Report

Bob welcomed members to the AGM. He thanked Jackie and Celia for providing lunch for those who had been on the morning walk. Roger thanked Bob for all his hard work as Chair.

Bob's report is attached.

2. Treasurer's Report

Brian's report is appended to these minutes. The 2023/2024 Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance sheet are also appended.

The Accounts had been audited by Tony Sheward and been approved and signed off. Members voted to accept the 2023-24 IVW Financial Accounts. Proposed by Bob Wallace and Seconded by Elizabeth Lambert.

3. Officers Reports

The reports from Roy Carter (Membership), Roger McLeod (Social and Programme), Derek Turner, and Tom Collier (Publicity) are attached to these minutes.

4. Election of Officers

a) Roger was standing down as Programme Secretary, a post he had held for 2 years. Bob thanked Roger for the hard work he had done as Programme Secretary. He also thanked Ligia (Roger's wife) who had assisted him over the years. Ivel Valley member Sandra Axtell has agreed to be nominated as the new Programme Secretary.

b) Mandy Wisson was standing down as a Committee member after 8 years on the Committee. Bob asked Fran to send a letter of thanks from IVW

c) The rest of the Committee had agreed to remain in their posts for the next year. As there had been no other nominations all the Committee members plus Sandra Axtell were nominated by Barry Ingram and seconded by Brian Smith and approved by a majority vote.

Bob Wallace (Chair), Roger McLeod (Vice Chair and Social Secretary), Sandra Axtell (Programme Secretary, Fran Stedman (General Secretary), Brian Roe (Treasurer), Roy Carter (Membership Secretary), Tom Collier (Publicity Officer), Jan Wolfarth (Walks Coordinator), Derek Turner (Footpaths Officer).

5. Appointment of the Independent Examiner

Tony Sheward was proposed by Bob Wallace and seconded by Sandra Axtell and was accepted unanimously.

6. Bedfordshire Ramblers Area Matters

- a) With no chair for 2022/23 the Chairs of Leighton Buzzard, North Beds and Ivel Valley had met quarterly with Vanessa Swanson (Regional link Officer at Ramblers Headquarters)
- b) Julian Critchlow had agreed to be Area Treasurer so money continued to flow through to the Groups.
- c) A Bedfordshire Festival of Autumn Walks had been organised by the Groups and had been successful. Plans for BAFW 2025 were being made by a small committee made up of representatives of the four Bedfordshire Groups. Tom Collier had volunteered to be the IVW representative on the Committee.

7. Notified issue to be discussed:-

Videos on **Facebook** :-,

Following concerns about the privacy repercussions due to video footage on our FB page and the potential contravening of GDPR regulations, members at the meeting were asked to express their points of view regarding the continued posting of videos. Thereafter there was a secret ballot when members were asked to tick YES or NO for 'Video recording during walks?' **The result saw a majority vote for NO videos on FB until further notice. Bob underlined that any videos that were posted would be immediately taken down and if repeated the person would be banned from using FB.**

Members stated how much they enjoy the photographs and thanked Tom, Sandra and others for their contributions.

8. Any Other Business

- a) A member pointed out that there were several local publications that advertised other walking group's programmes. Bob said that he also had seen these and would make sure this was discussed at the next IVW Committee meeting.
- b) Barry spoke about the work done by the RIPPLE team. In the last three months the group had contributed 600-man hours over 80 days. It was estimated that this worth £10000 of labour costs to the Local Authority - £30000 per annum. Bob thanked Barry and his team for all their hard work in helping to maintain our footpaths.

10. Date of IVEL VALLEY WALKERS 2025 AGM

Sunday 9th November 2025 at 2.00pm. Venue to be advised.

APPENDICES

1. ATTENDEES at the 2024 AGM

See below

2. REPORTS

CHAIR REPORT - IVEL VALLEY WALKERS 2024 AGM

THE PAST

In 1984 Robin Setchwell and a group of friends inaugurated the **Ivel Valley Walkers Group** – a private member's walking group. It was a few years later when this Group joined the Ramblers Association. On 17th July 2024 at Langford, members celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the formation of **Ivel Valley Walkers**. The day commenced with a choice of three walks - 10, 7 or 5 miles long. Returning from the various walks, a wonderful aroma of hog roast summoned walkers and

non-walkers alike to lunch. With 90 members from various eras present, Tony Sheward, a long-standing member of the Group, gave a talk tracing the club from its early days to the present. The celebration was concluded by the cutting of the Anniversary cake by two founding members of **Ivel Valley Walkers**. A big Thank You to Mary and her team of helpers who served tea and cakes made kindly by members.

THE PRESENT

As 2024 draws to a close I can report on a very successful and active year for Ivel Valley Walkers.

- 189 walks provided for our members on Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.
- 3 away day to London Saturday walks.
- 3 six day holidays based in Lymington, Okehampton and Swanage.
- a coach trip to walk in the Cotswolds
- numerous Social events including gliding, kayaking, bowling and a trip to a brewery.

This amazing list of activities was only possible because of our amazing members who organise and lead these events. The strength of the club is due to the outstanding contribution of our members. I thank you all.

THE FUTURE

Our walks coordinators are already working on our Spring programme running from January to April. Before that we have our usual Christmas activities

- Christmas Walk in London
- Christmas Lunch
- Mulled Wine Ramble
- Post Christmas Sherry Ramble.

Holidays are already arranged in the Calvados region of France in May and Anglesey in June/July.

There could also be an Autumn holiday as well.

Plus more social events.

As usual a busy year for Ivel Valley Walkers.

None of the above would be possible without the Ivel Valley Walkers Committee and to these people I say a very big thank you. I have already said that the strength of the club is due to the outstanding contribution of our members. However, it is the committee that bring these contributions together.

A plea from me! We urgently need new Committee members. To you here today and others reading this report please consider joining the Committee. Contact myself or any member of the existing committee – or come along to join us at any committee meeting (usually held in Bedford). The next one is on Tuesday 7th January.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for having me as your Chair this year. If re-elected I look forward to serving you for another year.

Bob Wallace – Chair of Ivel Valley Walkers 3/11/2024

Ivel Valley Finance Report-2024 AGM

Please note that when I am referring to last year, this year, or next year, I am referring to the financial year. This financial year, for which I am presenting the accounts, is from 1st. October 2023 to 30th. September 2024.

The first sheet shows the income and expenditure for this year.

Administration Account

Our budget for this year was accepted and we received £1080 from Area to cover governance costs and the production of three printed programmes. Although this year's programmes were significantly more expensive to produce, the increased costs were offset

by the extra advertising revenue we received. Advertising income not received before the year end has been accrued into this year's accounts. We finished the year with a surplus of just over £50.

Social Account

Payments and expenses from last year, for this year's events, are included in the accounts. Similarly, payments made this year for next year's events, will be carried forward to next year's accounts. The rationale of the Social account is that all activities should be self-funded and aim to break even. It is necessary to have some reserves to cover events which fail to break even, and to prevent cash flow problems. If the reserves are too high, some events may be subsidised. I have listed all the activities for this year. You can see which activities made a surplus and which ones were in deficit. The Swanage holiday, which took place after the end of the financial year is included, as all the financial transactions occurred during the financial year. Overall, there was a surplus on the Social Events Fund this year of £18.

Special Events / Hardship Fund

This fund was setup last year as a result a kind donation of £500 from one of our members. It was decided that some of the advertising income from the walk's programmes should be used to cover any 40th Anniversary expenses. As a result, £320 of advertising income was added to the fund. This money was used to pay for the 40th. Anniversary badges and certificates for the 40th. Anniversary Greensand Ridge Bus Walks. This left a surplus of £48.

Balance Sheet

The left side of the sheet shows the value of our assets. These include the money we have at the bank plus debtors and accrued income. Debtors can include money owed to us and expenses paid in advance, including payments which have been amortised, ie. spread over several years. The right side of the sheet shows the value of the funds, not the same thing as the corresponding account balance. In fact, the Social Account now contains money related to two separate funds. The accumulated fund is just the sum of all the funds. The current value of the funds should be equal to the value brought forward from last year plus the surplus or deficit for this year. If we add in the creditors, including payments made in advance by members for next year's events, this should balance with the assets. The fund values at the end of the year were:

- Administration Fund £729
- Social Events Fund £796
- Special Events / Hardship Fund £534

Independent Examination

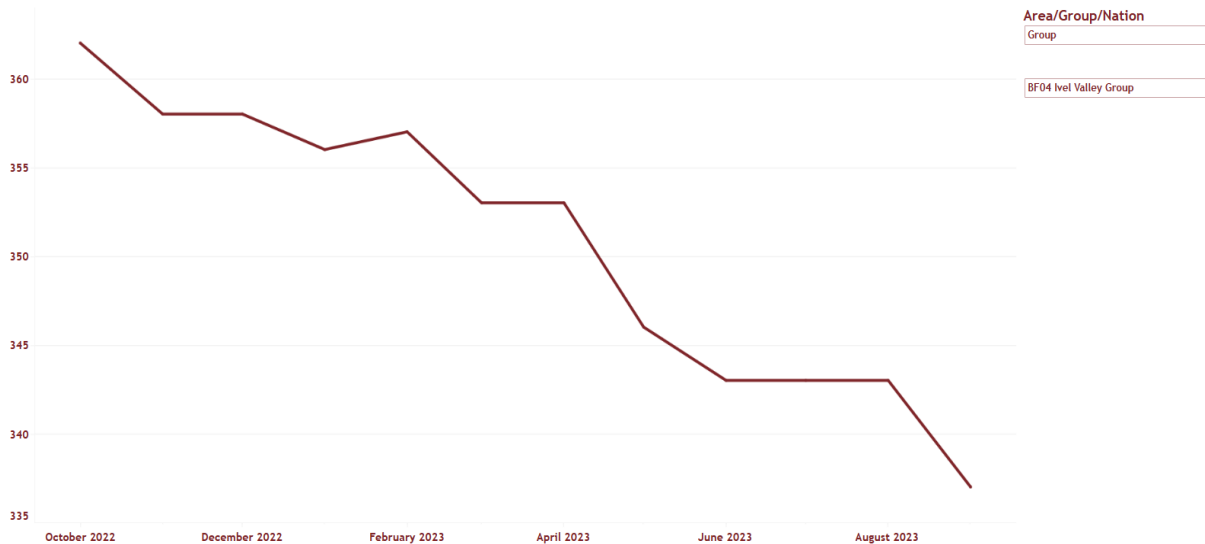
The accounts have been independently examined and signed off by Tony Sheward and will be sent as a separate attachment.

Brian Roe
Treasurer

IVW Membership Secretary Report

Roy Carter, 28th October 2024

IVW membership changes over the past 24 months 2023



2024



Both the graphs above chart the changes in IVW membership over the last two years from October 2022 to August 2024. The Top graph is 2023, the bottom graph is 2024. It shows the membership has dropped from 362 to 323 members across the 2yr period with a slight upturn from June 2024 to 328. Fluctuations will always be evident because members come and go or because the membership renewal process can take several months if the member is not using Direct Debit. However, the trend continues to be downward until recently.

Let's hope we've turned a corner.

Membership Analysis

The net growth across this year (Oct 23 – Sept 24) was a loss of eleven members. That's 35 members joining and 46 members leaving which is attributed to the following reasons:

- 5 members transferred out to other Ramblers Groups – 4 members transferred in.
- 41 members either resigned or let their membership lapse – the majority letting it lapse.

There was an illustration of membership in the report last year which showed a snapshot of membership for the month of September 2023 (see the Table below). I have reproduced the same illustration to show the changes now in 2024 as a comparison:

Summary Dashboard for IVW	Septemb er 2023	Septemb er 2024
Active Members & Payment Pending Members	343	326
Payment Pending Members	1	1
New Members	2	2
Re-joiners	2	1
Transfers In	0	2
Leavers	-9	-3
Transfers Out	-1	0
Active Members at Months End	337	328
Net Growth	-6	2

The IVW membership is well supported by 34 Affiliate members who are always welcome to lead walks for Ivel Valley or join us in our events, trips and holidays throughout the year (restrictions sometimes apply to holidays).

Another detail that can be extracted from the Ramblers database is statistics detailing the makeup of membership to help the Committee promote membership and target expenditure. This is shown for September 2024 in the Table below and details the following statistics:

- The Age demographic of the membership
- The percentage of membership who are Volunteers
- Gender distribution

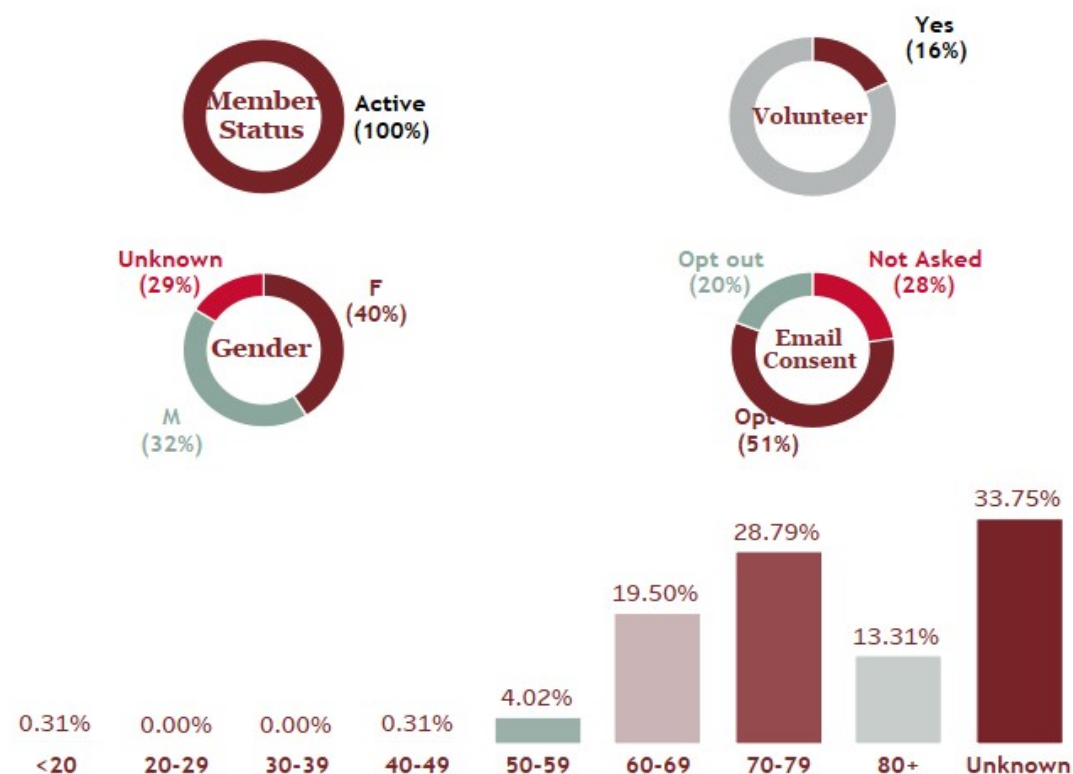
Member Status

Active

Graphs showing Active members for month end September, FY 2024

323

Ramblers



Membership Fees

The Ramblers review their membership fees every year to ensure they provide great benefits and is good value for money. This year's review has been approved by the Ramblers board. The Ramblers continue to see significant spikes in their costs due to inflation. So, they've taken the decision to increase our membership fees by 5% for the year ahead.

Individual annual membership will now go up by £2 from £41 to **£43** (£3.58 /month).

Joint Annual Membership is going up by £3 from £55 to **£58** (£4.83 /month).

Individual Lifetime Membership is now £943.50 & Joint Lifetime Membership is £1168.00.

The changes take effect from **1 October 2024** for new members and on the date of the next renewal for existing members.

Direct Debit offer

Any of our current members who pay by cash can save 20% by transferring to Direct Debit – a discount of between £8-12 on 2024-25 fees. This offer is in all renewal communications.

Concessionary rates

If any of our members are struggling, the Ramblers have concessionary rates available, for full-time students, people on means-tested benefits on state pension.

Programme Secretary's Report - 2024 AGM

The group has had a very successful programme this year. There have been some novel walks among them, the North Beds Heritage Walk, to be continued, the Greensand Ridge Walk as well as the a morning and evening Summer Solstice Walk, and London Walks.

We have also had three holidays in Lymington, Okehampton and Swanage. Thanks to Bob and Celia and Roy C, Tom and Roy D for arranging these excellent holidays.

Thanks to the hard work of Mark, Michele and Ligia, we have produced excellent printed programmes, that do a great job for both our members and in providing a great publicity tool for publicising our group. Ligia deserves my very special thanks in streamlining the programme and finding methods of recording the walks.

Our thanks to all our leaders who make everything possible, we are also, fortunate that we have recruited some new leaders to replace those retiring leaders which is essential.

I am delighted that Sandra is taking over the programme and Ligia and I will help her to make this a smooth transition!

Roger

IVW Social Secretary's Report - 2024 AGM

This year we have had a number of well attended social events, arranged by a number of our members that have included:

- Badminton
- Gliding
- Kayaking
- Yomp Chomp and Roll Up as part of our 40th Anniversary Celebrations
- Trip to the Brewpoint.
- Coach trip to Broadway

The Bedford River Festival gave us a forum to advertise IVW and I would like to thank everyone who came along to help over the weekend.

A forthcoming event to take place in late January will be a 60s, 70s disco at the Rowing Club in Bedford!

Our thanks to all those making these events possible.

Roger

IVW Footpath Secretary's Report – 2024 AGM

Setting up the Local Footpath Officer scheme has been the main thing I've done this year. Many IVW members have come forward and offered to check the condition of paths in a parish and sometimes in two parishes. However, a few parishes, mainly on the east side of the A1, remain vacant.

The full list is-

Biggleswade
Campton and Chicksands
Clifton
Dunton
Edworth
Everton
Haynes
Potton
Sandy
Southill
Sutton
Stondon
Tempsford
Wrestlingworth and Eyeworth

We heard recently of plans to designate a new footpath on land between Henlow and Clifton. Any new path is welcome, and this should be particularly useful for those who live in the area.

Central Bedfordshire Council continue to process Definitive Map Modifications slowly, apparently due to lack of resources, and few changes have been made to the path network except where necessitated by development. The wet weather has affected the condition of public rights of way with many remaining extremely muddy until well into the spring. Some paths remain closed where bridges or path surfaces require attention.

Derek

IVW Publicity Officer's Report – 2024 AGM

- The Walk magazine is now online.
- Tom has agreed to take on the role of Area Representative. His main area of focus will be on publicity for south of the area.
- The IVW printed programme has regular articles from members and he thanked those who had submitted reports and encouraged others to send items into Roger on holidays or places of interest that they had visited. Neither the Solstice nor the Okehampton report were printed in the Walk Magazine. Barry's 40th Anniversary article was printed.
- FaceBook – Tom thanked Sandra Axtell for her support. There are now 159 members on FB.
- Tom reiterated that the FB is a closed group and is a forum for member's photos/comments and general information.
- There is a need for advertising IVW in area magazines. This will be raised at the next committee meeting.

Tom

Attendees

Brian Smith	Jenny Emanuel
Sue Smith	Jackie Baker
Tony Sheward	
Charlie Norman	
Trish Brickhill	
Eric Cartwright	
Roy Dunham	Committee Members
Sandra Axtell	Bob Wallace
John Nichol	Brian Roe
Andy Read	Fran Stedman
Sylvia Howard	Roy Carter
Celia Wallace	Tom Collier
Rachel Bryce	Roger McLeod
Dee Clarke	Derek Turner
Sue Cook	
Barry Ingram	
Dee Brockway	
Elizabeth Lambert	
Pete Patmore	
Mel and Denise Stringer	
Bridget Crossman	