

**RA IVEL VALLEY WALKERS
MINUTES OF THE AGM
Zoom Meeting – Tuesday 9 November 2021, at 7:30pm**

1. **Present** 39 members present ACTION
2. **Apologies for absence:** 4 members
Absent: 1 member, Roger McLeod
3. **Minutes of the AGM held on 10 November 2021**
The Minutes were accepted by majority vote.
4. **Matters Arising:**
Printed programme - The committee are regularly discussing the ongoing situation and will provide a printed programme as needs require it.
Walk group sizes – a survey was carried out in January 2021. The results showed that members wanted group leaders to determine walking group sizes rather than the committee and a majority favoured groups sizes of between 10 and 15 walkers.
5. **Reports from Committee Officers:**
Chairman's report:
The chairman's report covered:
 - The effects of lockdown restrictions on the walks programme
 - Social activities carried out after lockdown during 2021
 - Looking ahead to social events in 2022
 - Thanking the committee, walk leaders and coordinators for their dedication and effort in getting activities back up and running.
 - Thanked three committee members standing down and presented them with a bottle of wine each:
Gillian Wilkes
Derek Turner
Carol BondA full copy of the Chairman's report is attached.

6. **Treasurer's Report:**

The treasurer read through the accounts which are listed on the website.

Income and Expenditure - Administration

- Expenditure has reduced because walk programmes are not being printed and village halls are not being hired for meetings.
- Because of the lack in expenditure it was decided to waive the 3rd and 4th quarter funding from the Ramblers.

Overall the balance resulted in a loss of £14.

Social Activities

Loss of £12

This is a perfect end to the year as the social account aims to break even.

The cash position is strong and there is enough to meet all our upcoming obligations.

Tony Sheward audited the accounts as the Independent Auditor.

The accounts were accepted; proposed by Robert Wallace and seconded by Bernard Morse.

A full copy of the Treasurer's report is attached.

7. **Footpath's Officer Report**

Members were encouraged to report any footpath issues directly to the relevant council body rather than Ramblers 'pathwatch'.

Plans to upgrade East-West road and rail links will affect some footpaths but most planned works have taken Public Footpaths into account.

There will be a new bridge over the railway line at Biggleswade to replace a level crossing.

DT is following 'Don't Lose Your Way' initiative designed to resurrect any ancient paths that have disappeared. He has not found any in Bedfordshire to be concerned about and will continue with the project when he leaves the committee.

8. **Membership Secretary Report**

Membership is steady with a flow of people leaving and joining – now 360 (was 361 last year).

RMcN confirmed she does not hold any personal data on computer. If a member is not receiving emails, the problem will be on the Ramblers site. RMcN is happy to help anyone who may have a problem with their details on the main site.

RMcN reminded us that it is preferable to send member notifications by email as it is easier and cheaper than sending it by post. She encourages all members who have email to make sure they are receiving notifications. She is happy to help anyone unsure of how to move from post to email.

9. **Election of Officers and Committee members:**

Roy read through the nominations to the committee as detailed below:

Officers			
Position	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Chairman	Roy Carter	RB	Gillian Wilkes
Treasurer	Garry Wallace	NM	Pauline Seddon
General Secretary			
Membership Secretary	Ruth McNally	Gillian Wilkes	DC
Programme Secretary	Alan Rowland	Pauline Seddon	MM
Footpaths Officer	John Clark	TS	Fran Stedman
Webmaster	Pauline Seddon	MS	Gillian Wilkes
Publicity Officer			
Social Secretary	Roger McLeod	Mandy Wisson	Tom Collier
Committee Members			
Member	Tom Collier	Ruth McNally	Pauline Seddon
Member	Mandy Wisson	Tom Collier	Roger Mcleod
Distribution Officer	Jan Wolfarth	JK	MM
Member	Dee Brockway	Mandy Wisson	Roger Mcleod
Member	Fran Stedman	Mandy Wisson	Roger Mcleod

RC welcomed three new volunteers onto the committee

John Clark – Footpaths Officer

Dee Brockway – Committee Member

Fran Stedman – Committee Member

Committee members were voted in en-bloc.

RC expects that the position of General Secretary will be filled by one of the 5 non-officer committee members by January 2022.

10. **Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Tony Sheward gave a thumbs up to continue as Independent Examiner for the Group and was approved by a majority vote.

11. **Message from NM**

Nick thanked everyone on the committee and walk leaders, coordinators for all their hard work during the year.

12. **Any Other Business**

FS thanked the committee and walk leaders for all the work carried out so walks were available to all.

DB felt the message on the IVW website about Covid was a little heavy handed. Other walk sites now put Covid information on a link so people can access it if they want to. Specifically DB does not like rule 8 and would like it removed completely.

It was agreed that we should move the main Covid guidance to a pdf but leave a reminder on the website that Covid still exists and that we should exercise caution and respect the wishes of others who are more cautious. PS will adjust the website accordingly.

PS

The Area AGM is on 28th November at 2pm. NM will let PS know when details of the area AGM is on the area website so she can set up a link to it.

NM/PS

GLW thanked those who are paying by BACS and reminded them that they must include the Reference Name of the event along with the payment. Without it, it's difficult to work out what the payment is for. Payments by cheque can be paid in at the bank by those wishing to use this method.

DB thanked RC for all the work he does for the club.

The meeting closed at 8:33.

13. **Date of next AGM: TBA**

Members are invited to email the Chairman with their views on how the meeting went and whether our future meetings should be held on Zoom or not.

AGM 2021

Hall: Sunday 6th November at 2:00pm to include a walk and lunch beforehand.

Or

Zoom: Tuesday 8th November in the evening at 7:30pm.

IVW Chairman's Report

Unlike previous years, 2021 started very disappointingly in lockdown countrywide. We could not celebrate Christmas in our usual way nor organise a Pre-Christmas Lunch or Mulled Wine Ramble. We couldn't offer any group walks from our prepared Spring programme until the 12th April. During this period we could only walk in pairs or in bubbles and eventually in groups of 6 as the Governments Covid-19 Roadmap evolved. The committee met monthly on Zoom to discuss the situation, during which time we asked members to vote on whether numbers on walks should be controlled by walk leaders or by the committee. An issue the committee had debated for months. The membership returned a decision that walk leaders should control their own walk numbers which helped us going forward in April when IVW returned to group walking. The Rolling programme of walks adopted after the 1st lockdown was reintroduced again in April, considering the roadmap out of lockdown remained so unpredictable. Most walk leaders actually preferred to have an "online" presence so they could alter walk details as the roadmap changed, rather than have a printed version of it. This system remains today and I thank the Programme Secretary, Alan Rowland, and the Webmaster, Pauline Seddon, for organising an online programme of walks for this situation.

It was a surprise in April that 18 members who had booked self-catering accommodation were given the green light from government to go walking in Ambleside, on our cancelled holiday from last year. The local populous looked upon us nervously as they hadn't seen groups of walkers this size in the Lake District since late last summer. We had to take care not to raise concerns. The weather also helped to make the whole week very enjoyable and the walks went to plan. My thanks go to Pauline Seddon who helped me prepare and lead the walks. All being well we both plan to repeat this holiday next year for those who were unable to attend it this year because of the restrictions in accommodation.

It was fortunate we didn't make any firm plans for social events over Christmas 2020 and into 2021 because of lockdown. It wasn't until April before hope emerged of organising social events like a summer barbecue, which occurred in late July. Thankfully, it went according to plan for around 30+ members who were able to attend. My thanks go to Bernard & Mary Morse for organising the barbecue at Langford Bowls Club and to walk leaders, Marcus Kilby & Mary Morse. It was a sunny day and the first time many of us had met after lockdown. The event was quickly followed on July 31st by a day on the Ouse where about 20 members took canoes and kayaks up and down the river from Bedford. Afterwards there were tea and cakes on the embankment and by all accounts everyone enjoyed the event. My thanks go to Roger McLeod and Mandy Wisson for organising it and those who helped prepare tea. Barry Ingram was at both events to take photos, thank you.

In August Roger & I managed to lead a London Walk where 54 of us from several Ramblers groups in Bedfordshire visited churches to the rhyme of 'Oranges & Lemons'. It was quite a sight, all us walking out to Stepney and very lucky that the streets had few tourists and little traffic. Attendance has slowly returned on walks through the summer and has attracted new members. We also saw numbers rise on some IVW walks during the Bedfordshire Walking Festival and I thank walk leaders for their contributions to the event. The festival was seen as a success despite some restrictions on walk numbers and advertising. IVW would like to thank Nick Markham and Barry Ingram for organising the walking festival.

Another surprise was those willing to travel by coach to Ironbridge in September for the day. The trip had its moments of delay but was enjoyed by everyone on board and I thank Roger McLeod for organising a welcomed outing. The IVW long weekend to Marlborough went ahead for 32 of our members. Traffic was very busy around town because of the Mop Fair. The walks were held in pleasant conditions and I thank Antony Copsey and Nick & Marion Watt for helping to organise the walking routes. Martin Whillis was helping too but had to drop out due to ill health and we wish him well.

In addition to IVW events, we continued to support Ramblers Area initiatives in Training and Path Restoration. Training began with a number of on-line courses at the beginning of the year but the outdoor RIPPLE activities couldn't really begin until April. Since then the RIPPLE tasks have been substantial and intense because of lockdown. I would like to thank Nick Markham and Barry Ingram for continuing to arrange these activities for the Ramblers.

Looking ahead to next year, we know that Covid will remain an umbrella over many of our planned walks and activities. The second holiday to Ambleside will be from 8th to 13th May. A second holiday to Hartington is planned from 24th to 29th April for members who have not booked Ambleside for 2022. We expect members to be on one or other holiday, not both. Other breaks planned include the City Break to Bristol & Bath cancelled from 2020, a City Excursion to Leeds and at some stage a long weekend in the autumn. We will have to plan a couple of coach trips through the year. On the social front, Roger has arranged an auction evening at W.H Peacock on Thursday 26th May and is looking at other events like a Thames Barge trip and possible Canal boat ride. He has also received interest from members for the body flight at Thurleigh. In fact there is quite a lot being planned and arranged from now until the next Committee Meeting in January when these plans and ideas will be discussed.

The Committee will be losing three members at this AGM.

Gillian Wilkes is stepping down as General Secretary to explore the world with husband, following his retirement. Gillian was not convinced by the committee saying that Zoom & Email works very well from Tropical Islands too; she was having none of that and is leaving.

Derek Turner is stepping down as Footpath Officer because he has always been very busy with community work and now finds he has even less time to relax with his family. He has offered to continue working on the Ramblers project 'Don't Lose Your Way'.

Carol Bond is leaving the committee after more than 5 years helping with publicity and shaping the direction of Ivel Valley Walkers.

I thank Gillian, Derek & Carol for their contributions on the committee and their continued support of Ivel Valley Walkers.

Lastly, I would like to thank Sue Tate who is stepping down as Tuesday Walk Coordinator. Sue worked on the Committee in the past and we hope to see her on walks in the future.

Please join me in giving all of the Committee members, a round of applause. Thank you.

Roy Carter

Chairman, Ivel Valley Walkers

Ruth McNally
Membership Secretary's Report
9th October 2021

IVW has 361 members, including 17 affiliate members.

Data on membership changes (new members, movers and leavers) is only available from 10th July 2021.

Since 10th July 2021, 8 new members have joined IVW, including 1 affiliate member.

Since 10th July 2021, there have been 14 movers and leavers. The breakdown of these is:

- 8 lapsed;
- 4 resigned;
- 1 moved area;
- 1 moved group.

In order to safeguard personal data, I do not maintain or store any distribution lists. These are stored and maintained by the Ramblers Association. For each mail out, I download the relevant, up-to-date distribution list from the Ramblers Association database, use it and then permanently destroy it. If you are experiencing any problems regarding communications from IVW or the Ramblers Association, then please do not hesitate to contact me for my assistance.

Most members have given their consent for us to send information about our AGM, our walks and trips and events, and our Newsletter by email rather than by post. This is very helpful since it saves both time and money. If you still receive our mailings through the post and would like to change to email, please get in touch with me and I will assist you.

Wishing you all the best for the forthcoming year.

Ruth McNally

Derek Turner
Footpath Officer's Report
9th October 2021

The Footpath Officer's work this year has involved the usual mixture of short-term issues such as monitoring temporary path closures and evaluating the impact of large infrastructure schemes on the path network. In addition, the process to identify missing paths ahead of the 2026 deadline has accelerated.

Bob Tarron, Area Footpath Officer, has continued to pass me notices of Modification Orders and other legal processes affecting public rights of ways. I monitor these and many of them are related to developments such as the large one around Houghton Regis. I have not seen any contentious ones during the last year although some require lengthy temporary closures. Usually, a satisfactory alternative route has been made available.

Plans to replace the well-used Lindsells level crossing of the railway north of Biggleswade with a bridleway bridge have advanced with planning permission now granted. When built, the bridge will provide a safer crossing and accommodate a section of Biggleswade's Green Wheel. It will be situated nearly 400m north of the current crossing which will make short walks for Biggleswade dog walkers longer but should make little difference to longer walks for IVW members.

Further consultations for the East-West rail project took place earlier in the year and lower predicted train speeds means that some proposals to close or divert paths crossing the the line on the level will not be required after all. The exact alignment of the new route from Bedford towards a new station near Sandy or Tempsford and on towards Cambridge remains uncertain for now. As the plans evolve, details of changes affecting public rights of way will need careful scrutiny to check for the impact on walkers.

Most of the route for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet road scheme is situated in Cambridgeshire in an area with relatively few public rights of way. Highways England say that construction could start during 2022 and while some paths may require closure while this is underway, the long term impact on the path network should be minimal.

The Don't Lose Your Way search for unrecorded historic paths continues and earlier in the year, the Ramblers Association reported that nearly 50,000 miles of 'lost' paths had been identified. Footpath Secretaries have been asked to look through the suggestions and prioritise those for further investigation. The most important are those that would resolve dead ends and gaps in the network, improve walker safety, create circular routes, provide links to important public sites and improve countryside access where new development is planned. I have identified some paths in Bedfordshire that fit one or more of these criteria and need following up.

However, in many cases, the evidence for the path's existence seems to be rather flimsy especially where people have assumed that paths and tracks shown on old Bartholomew maps need recording when comparison with Ordnance Survey maps suggests that they were probably private routes such as farm tracks. I suspect that at least 95% of the routes identified can be discarded but this still leaves several miles of potential paths in our area for further investigation before the deadline for registration of historic routes is reached.

I have decided to relinquish the role of Footpath Officer at the AGM but look forward to helping someone else take on the role.

Wishing you all the best.

Derek Turner