

Hi IVW member,

Here is a summary of the minutes of the IVW Committee meeting held on Tuesday 18th April 2023. If you have any questions, please contact me or any other Committee member.

Regards

Bob Wallace

Chair of Ivel Valley Walkers

Email chairmanivw@gmail.com

Draft minutes of the IVW Committee meeting - 18th April 2023

Held at Goldington Reading & Recreation Rooms at 1, Barkers Lane, Goldington, Bedford MK41 9SH

Present: Bob Wallace (Chair), Roger McLeod (Vice Chair and Programme Secretary), Tom Collier (Publicity Officer), Roy Carter (Membership Secretary), Jan Wolfarth (Walks Coordinator), Fran Stedman (General Secretary), Derek Turner (Footpath Officer), Brian Roe (Treasurer), Mandy Wisson (Walks Coordinator)

1. Notes on the Bedfordshire Area Group Chairs meeting 24th February 2023

Bob had attended a Bedfordshire Area Group chairs meeting in February – Vanessa Slawson, the Ramblers Regional Engagement Officer (South-East) and Kevin (Area Treasurer) also attended. The main points discussed were -

- a) **Finance** Kevin said that new signatories had been approved by Unity Bank and monies could now be paid from Area to Groups. There was £3500 in the Bedfordshire Area bank account.
- b) **Festival of Autumn Walks** was discussed. Further details on this matter are in Agenda item 10 below.
- c) **Area Footpath Officers** Stephen and Patrizia Franks were the new joint Area Footpath Officers. *Derek said that he had been contacted by Stephen Franks who mentioned meeting up with the Group Footpath Officers, but no date has yet been arranged.*
- d) Since the November 2022 AGM, the Area is in abeyance except for the work done by the Area Treasurer and Area Footpath Secretary. The four Group Chairs will meet occasionally to monitor Area matters. The next meeting will be on 25th May.

2. Chair's Report

Bob thanked members of the Committee for all the hard work they had done for IVW Group since the last Committee meeting. The Summer Programme of Walks would soon be available, the Fortnightly Updates were well received by members, there was activity on Footpath matters, a Facebook page had been set up, the Social Activities were numerous, the Melrose holiday was planned, and Finance matters were now under control. Bob also mentioned the contribution of the Walk Leaders – without them we would not exist. He added that, in his opinion, the strength of IVW was due to this outstanding Member contribution. However, Bob then said that the Committee's workload is very high, and more help is needed. Extra Committee members need to be recruited for 2023/24 (ie at the November 2023 AGM). In addition, more Walk Leaders and holiday organisers are needed. It was agreed that all Committee members would lobby members to help. It was noted that members are now welcome to come to Committee meetings to find out how the Committee works. The July meeting would be mentioned in the 'Fortnightly Updates' just before the next meeting.

3. Treasurer's Report

Brian stated that as of the end of February all necessary changes of authorisations to the IVW Admin and Social bank accounts at Unity Bank were completed. Brian (Treasurer), Bob (Chair) and Roger (Vice Chair) could access the accounts. Two signatures were required for payments to be made. Brian circulated the latest state of the ADMIN and SOCIAL accounts.

a) **Ambleside Refunds.**

13 people paid a deposit of £15 each for the Ambleside holiday (£195 total) but did not go because IVW cancelled the holiday due to COVID and these people could not go on the revised date.

The 'Refund Policy' agreed at the December 2022 Committee meeting stated that –

'Refunds for members when they cancel should be made with the approval of the Chair/Vice Chair'. The guidelines that should be followed is that after refunds, the 'trip/event' should be in surplus.

Note the above policy states 'when they cancel'. Ambleside is a special case because IVW were forced to cancel the original trip because of COVID. Hence the matter had been referred to the full committee.

It was noted that the 2021-22 Accounts show a surplus of £307.41 on the Ambleside Trip.

The Committee agreed that the deposits would be repaid to these 13 people.

b) **Reserves Policies for ADMIN and SOCIAL Accounts**

It was agreed at the January Committee meeting that that an IVW 'Reserves Policy' was required and would be brought to the April meeting for approval. Brian had circulated a draft document. After discussion, the document, with minor alterations, was approved.

c) **Other Matters**

It was noted that a donation of £500 had been received into the Social Account from a long-standing member. It was agreed that this sum would be placed into a Social Account Reserve Fund as permitted in the new 'Reserves Policy'. It would be used for Special Projects and, when appropriate, hardship reasons.

4. **Programme Secretary's Report**

a) The Summer Programme has been loaded up on the Ramblers Website.

b) 1000 booklets of the Spring Programme have been printed. Thanks were expressed to Mark, Michele, Ligia, and Roger for producing this excellent document. These booklets will be distributed to libraries and other locations. Our thanks to Jan for instigating this process. Hopefully this will raise the profile of IVW and encourage more people to walk with IVW. A PDF copy of the brochure will be sent to members together with one of 'Roy's fortnightly bulletins'

c) There were discussions on the Autumn Programme. It was agreed that a printed Autumn Programme (with articles) should be produced. For Financial Reasons (money not in the budget) this was not previously planned. However, the Committee felt that with the Festival of Autumn Walks taking place in September it would be an ideal opportunity to physically give prospective members an IVW Programme. It was agreed that external funding would be sought. If this was not forthcoming then, for this edition only, money available in the IVW accounts would be used.

d) There are no Friday Bus walks on the Summer Programme because it was felt that the unreliability of the current bus service made walks difficult to plan. However, members had indicated that they miss these Friday walks. The Committee agreed to reinstate Friday walks of 5 to 7 miles on alternate weeks for the Autumn programme. Jan volunteered to be the Friday walks coordinator but pointed out that we need walk leaders. Can members please offer to lead walks on a Friday and contact Jan to discuss further.

5. **Membership Secretary's Report**

a) There had been 10 new members in the past three months. Unfortunately, there had been 16 resignations – two of which were changing groups. The total membership including affiliates was 350.

b) Some members continue to receive the Walks Programme by post. To cut down on expensive postage costs, these members were contacted and asked to confirm that they wish to continue having the information sent by post. Only 3 had said that they wished to continue to receive the posted programme. It was noted that Affiliated members do not receive a posted copy.

c) Roy said that he had been contacted by Clare Hagerty, who works in the Volunteer support department of the Ramblers and lives in Biggleswade. She would like to come on an IVW walk to meet some of our members. Roy is discussing a suitable date with Clare and will keep the Committee informed of progress.

6. **Footpath Secretary's Report**

Derek had been contacted about the permissive path along the east bank of the River Ivel between Langford and Jordan's Mill. His contact would like to see the path become a public footpath which seems to be a

worthy objective. The well-used path between Langford Mill and Jordan's Mill near Broom is not registered as a public right of way and could be in danger of closure. The path is about just over a mile in length and follows the eastern bank of the River Ivel. It is a very scenic route and frequently offers walkers views of attractive plants and wildlife such as kingfishers and herons. Many of our members who live in various parts of Central Bedfordshire have used this path and it is very popular with people who live in Langford and with customers of Jordans Mill. Use of the path depends upon the landowner or owners allowing it. If they decided to close it, the many walkers that use the route would have no alternative public footpath between the Mills. They would be faced with a much less pleasant and longer walk along the busy B656 instead.

Chris Nicol, a Senior Rights of Way Officer at CBC, is aware of this issue and if he receives enough support from Councillors, he will be in a better position to discuss with the owner(s) of the land the prospect of making the riverside route a public right of way.

Derek's contact had already sent a letter to his local CBC councillor, but he requested that Derek (and other IVW members) did the same. The Committee thought that this was an excellent suggestion. From time to time there are issues about which it would be good to make the local Ramblers voice heard.

Derek had composed a template letter to be send out which was agreed by the Committee. Derek would arrange with Roy to send an email to members to explain the situation and encourage them to send their own letter to their local CBC Councillor. This would be done after the Council Elections in May.

7. Social Events and Trips

IVW has a very busy Social Calendar. Thanks were expressed to Roger, in particular, and other members who organise these events.

Future events include:

- a) Go Ape Adventure at Woburn Safari Park on Saturday 22nd April. 10 members signed up. *Contact Roger*
- b) Melrose Holiday - 14th May to 19th May. 47 members on the trip. Bookings are now closed. *Contact Roy*
- c) Isabella Plantation - Saturday 29th April. No booking required. *Contact Roy*
- d) Walk on Water - Saturday 8th July *Contact Roger*
- e) Day trip to Kent Weald and North Downs - 3rd June *Contact Barry*
- f) Yomp, Chomp and Roll-Up - Wednesday 12th July *Contact Bernard*
- g) Barn Dance - Saturday 4th November *Contact Val*
- h) Christmas Lunch - Wednesday 13th December *Contact Bernard*

There is also the possibility of a long weekend holiday (maybe near Matlock) from Friday 6th October to Monday 9th October 2023.

8. Communication to Members

a) **Facebook** Tom had created a Facebook account for IVW. This had been tested by 35 members in the last few weeks. The Committee agreed to open the account to all members. Roy would mention this in his next bulletin.

b) **SE Rambler** Tom had submitted a 'IVW document' for SE Rambler's next issue.

c) **Website. A volunteer is urgently needed to help with the website. The site is wixbased. – PLEASE, PLEASE contact the Chair.**

9. Festival of Autumn Walks

The Bedfordshire Walking Festival, as we know it, will not run this year because there was no area structure (committee) to support it. In its place, the Leighton Buzzard Group has offered to put together a reduced Festival of Autumn Walks (from Saturday 9th September to Sunday 17th September) to act as a pot boiler and keep the concept of a walking festival running. The four Bedfordshire Groups had been asked to participate by providing walks in their Areas.

This Festival of Autumn Walks is NOT intended as a replacement for the Bedfordshire Walking Festival. A Committee formed by representatives of the four Area Groups will be formed in September/October to plan and implement the 2024 Bedfordshire Walking Festival.

The Committee were disappointed that BWF 2023 would not take place. They agreed that it was important that the BWF2024 Committee should be set up by as soon as possible. Tom and Roy agreed to be IVW representatives on that Committee. It was agreed that IVW should participate in this Festival of Autumn walks. Walks would to be submitted by the end of May.

10. 40th Anniversary Projects

a) 40 Walks on Website

Bob said that we are still awaiting an OS Licence for the mapping part of this project. Andy Knight and Bob have applied to CBC and BBC for an OS Public Sector Licence. If this comes through the project can proceed as agreed.

b) Badges for Rucksacks/ Fleeces

The 30th Anniversary of the founding of Ivel Valley Walkers was marked by producing a 30th Anniversary Badge. The Committee agreed that a 40th Anniversary badge should be made. Suggestions for the design of the Badge were circulated by Roy. Fran and Roy had investigated the practicalities of sourcing the badges. It was agreed that a small committee (Roy, Fran, and Jan) would prepare a proposal for the July meeting which would include a suggestion of the design (probably 3 options) with costings.

12. Governance

a) An updated Constitution is being worked on. This will be brought, at the latest, to the September Committee meeting for approval. It can then be sent out to membership before the November AGM where approval will be sought. The Reserves Policy agreed at this meeting would be included.

b) As the Chair stated in his report, extra Committee members need to be recruited for 2023/24. It was agreed that there needs to be some form of succession planning. Volunteers are needed to join the Committee.

13. Date of Next Committee Meeting

Tuesday 18th July 2023 7.00pm to 9.00pm. at Goldington Reading & Recreation Rooms.

IVW members welcome to attend. Please contact Fran or Bob to let us know you are coming along.

Please note that the full Draft minutes will be approved (together with any necessary amendments) at the IVW Committee meeting on 18th July 2023.