

RAMBLERS RUSHCLIFFE GROUP AGM

SECRETARY'S REPORT

1 OCTOBER 2019 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

1. Introduction

This is not the report that I expected to write, but thanks to the outbreak of the pandemic known as Covid-19. Our year has been somewhat disrupted. At the start of the year, we had already planned a full programme of walks, social events and holidays. After a successful Christmas lunch and a convivial skittles evening, all our activities came to a grinding halt thanks to the lockdown ordered by the Government to stem the spread of Covid-19. Ramblers suspended all group-led walks and indoors face-to-face meetings from 18 March 2020 at least until 31 May 2020.

The Committee was faced with an unprecedented situation, which affected every aspect of our activities. I will deal with the various challenges at an appropriate place in the report.

2. Committee

The following were elected at the Annual General Meeting held on 17 November 2019 to serve on the committee for the following year:

Position	Committee Member
Chairman	Alan Wilson
Secretary	Mike Stock
Treasurer	Keith Coxon
Footpath Secretary	Rachel Tindsley
Rambles Programme	Lorraine Donovan
Joint Social Secretaries	Morag Hunter and Hazel Hilton
Membership Secretary	Rob Turner
Publicity/Webmaster	Trevor Griffiths
Weekends Away/Holiday Coordinators	Angela Dobie and Karen Lewis
Delegate to Area Council	Alan Wilson

The committee met seven times during the year with an average attendance of 83%. In addition, committee members served on various sub-committees set up to deal with specific issues as noted later in this report.

Apart from the October 2019 and January 2020 committee meeting, all other meetings have been held on-line. We used the WhatsApp text facility for the April meeting but moved on to Zoom for all subsequent meetings. We will continue to use Zoom for the near future.

Given below are the major decisions, made by the Committee other than those stated elsewhere in the report:

a. January meeting

Co-opted committee member

Shortly after the 2019 AGM Pam Duesbury volunteered to join the committee. This was agreed unanimously.

Declarations of Interest

The Committee decided that it would rely on an individual member's good sense and probity to say whether such conflict exists and if necessary abstain if a vote is required and/or absent themselves for that item. The secretary would record the declaration in the minutes.

First Aid Equipment

At the October 2019 meeting the Committee authorised setting up a sub-committee comprising Rob, Rachel and Mike to review the provision of first aid equipment. The sub-committee having reviewed various options taking into account, cost, organisation, responsibility for replacement and numbers of sets of kit, it recommended that the group continue with the present arrangements that all walkers should carry their own first aid kit as stated in the Code of Conduct for Walkers.

b. July meeting

Budget proposals

The Treasurer presented a budget statement for 2020/21. The Committee agreed that the group would take up the basic allocation of £405.07.

Volunteer Expenses Review

In accordance with Clause 1.4 of the Volunteer Expenses Policy dated 22/23 July 2019, the rates are to be reviewed annually at the July committee meeting for implementation for the following year. The rates for the financial year 2020/2021 will be:

Ref Clause	Rates/Limit	Existing	Agreed
2.1.2	Mileage Rate	28p per mile	28p per mile
2.1.3	Annual limit	£300.00	£300.00
2.2.2	Home Printing/ Photocopying	10p per sheet	10p per sheet

c. September meeting

The Committee authorised setting up a sub-committee comprising Alan, Mike, Keith and Rob to finalise arrangements for holding on-line AGM. The sub-committee met and agreed the arrangements.

3. Membership

As soon as lockdown was announced, with the Committee's approval, Rob set up the Rushcliffe Ramblers' self-help network to keep members in touch with each other, provide assistance with shopping etc. to those who needed it.

Rob also produced and circulated a regular Rushcliffe Ramblers' newsletter containing general chat, jokes, games, puzzles and even a virtual walk. The newsletter was much appreciated by members.

I am indebted to Rob for the statistics given below.

Table 1 Membership as 1st October 2020 (Central Office figures)

Year		2020	2019
Membership		1 st Oct	1 st Oct
Annual	Individual	171	139
Annual	Joint	149	123
Life	Individual	4	1
Life	Joint	8	
Annual Concession	Individual		26
Annual Concession	Joint		19
Life Concession	Individual		2
Life Concession	Joint		7
Totals		332	317
Affiliates	Individual	2	

Table 2 Individuals participating in all our activities

Activity	Walks	Holidays	Socials	Total
Rushcliffe	151	84	0	159
Other Groups	47	0	0	47
Non members	25	4	0	29
Former members	7	0	0	7
Totals	230	88	0	242

Table 3 Total participation in walks from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020

	Weekend	Mid-week	Short	Small Group	Total
Rushcliffe	429	56	165	282	1100
Other Groups	36	4	9	23	72
Non members	7	3	15	3	32
Former members	3	0	9	3	15
Total	475	63	198	311	1219
No of Walks	22	4	9	43	78
Average per walk	21.6	15.8	22	7.2	15.6

In spite of the lockdown and the restrictions placed upon our activities, we still managed to provide 78 walks for our members and others. 47% of our membership has taken part in one of our activities, which I think is impressive.

Our membership has increased from last year making us the largest group in the county.

4. Walks

At the start of the year, Lorraine had produced our excellent programme of walks, which had been distributed to members. Walks were proceeding normally until 17 March 2020 when Ramblers announced that all group-led walks would be suspended until at least 31 May 2020.

On 24 June 2020, we received notification from Ramblers that group-led walks could re-start on 1 July 2020 albeit with a number of restrictions but stressed there was no obligation on the part of groups to take part. The Committee met on 29 June 2020 to discuss and agree an action plan to put in place a programme of walks, a booking system and issue guidance to walkers and walk leaders. A sub-committee comprising Alan, Rob, Lorraine and Mike met on 1 July 2020 to finalise the details for the Small Group Walks programme.

On 17 July 2020, Alan led the first walk of the programme and by the end of September 2020, we have provided 43 walks of varying distances and locations.

Because the programme is updated on a monthly basis, it has meant a lot more work for Lorraine, which she has undertaken with her usual efficiency.

Thank you for the efforts of all the walk leaders particularly for taking on the extra responsibilities caused by the pandemic.

5. Walking Holidays

Covid-19 seriously decimated our holiday programme organised by Angela and Karen. The hospitality sector has been badly hit by the effects of the virus and was loath to take any decision to cancel holidays until it was absolutely necessary.

The HF holidays to Derwent Bank, Dovedale and Croatia have been transferred to 2021. Angela has been involved in a lot of work negotiating with HF, organising transfers to 2021 and in some cases the refund to participants who are unable to go on the revised dates. Keith provided assistance on the financial issues.

Karen was hoping that the weekend to Malvern would go ahead as planned but almost at the last minute, due to changes in the Covid rules, the restaurants booked for the evening meals were unable to cater for the group. On 14 September, Karen reluctantly cancelled the weekend away and transferred it to 2021.

6. Social Events

First here is some good news among all the cancellations and compliance with restrictions. Hazel and Morag were able to put on two social events during the year before the lockdown.

a. Christmas Lunch 15 December 2019

62 members and guests attended the lunch at Ramsdale Golf Club following a short walk led by Joe Colls. After an excellent lunch, our resident poet laureate Pam regaled the assembled company with her review of the Rushcliffe year followed by the raffle.

b. Skittles Evening 26 February 2020

24 members attended an enjoyable evening of skittles at the Royal Oak, East Bridgford, where the Alley Cats took on the Dirty Dozen in a no-holds barred combat. After a titanic contest, the Dirty Dozen ran out victors and the Alley Cats were left to lick their wounds. Malcolm Ginever was the winner of the prize for the individual highest score. Both teams repaired to the bar and enjoyed a hot supper.

Unfortunately, that is the end of the good news. All the other proposed events such as the trip to the National Brewery at Burton on Trent and the Christmas Lunch at Colwick Hall have been cancelled and transferred to 2021.

Hazel and Morag with assistance from Keith, spent a lot of time and effort organising these events and were then involved in negotiating terms and agreeing the transfers to 2021.

7. Publicity/Website

At the January committee meeting, the Committee agreed to set up a sub-committee to review how we publicise the group's activities with a view to attracting more members and generally publicise walking as an enjoyable and healthy pastime. Led by Trevor the sub-committee comprising Rob, Pam, Karen, Rushcliffe Move & Mingle and the Vale of Belvoir met several times and concluded that we should produce a publicity leaflet promoting the benefits of walking, types of walk on offer and contact information. They also researched various funding streams and have identified and received £250 from Rushcliffe BC 'REACH' award, £125 from Notts Area. Our Group will contribute £125. Due to the pandemic, the distribution of the leaflets has been delayed until early next year.

Trevor has also run the website and updated it as and when necessary.

8. Conclusion

It is probably a statement of the obvious but this year has been unique in the challenges that it has thrown at us both personally and as a Group. It has made us very aware of the benefits that walking in beautiful countryside in good company gives us.

I want to place on record my thanks to the Committee for all their hard work in dealing with the issues caused by the pandemic. From the first announcement of the lockdown the Committee ably led by our Chairman Alan decided to take a positive view and not be overwhelmed by the situation which I think is self-evident from my report.

Clearly, we are still in the grip of the pandemic with greater restrictions about to be placed on parts of Nottinghamshire.

One thing the pandemic has taught us is the value of friendships, social interaction that I like to think, is provided by Rushcliffe Ramblers.

Stay safe and healthy

Mike Stock
Secretary
16 November 2020