

2024 Annual General Meeting of Bury St Edmunds Ramblers' Association held at 10.30 on Saturday 2nd November at Southgate Community Centre

Attendance – 36

1 Welcome – Val welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence – 16 apologies were received and listed.

3 Minutes of AGM 4th Nov.2023 – were agreed and signed. Proposed by Jenny Bradin; seconded by Rosie Perham.

4 Matters Arising – none.

5 Chair's Annual Report – Val observed that our plan as a committee was to maintain the events that work for our membership wherever possible. She thanked all those who had run or helped to run a wide variety of activities, including the Committee, walk leaders, trip leaders, function leaders and refreshment helpers and in particular those who organised the Minehead trip and those who are organising the Newby Bridge trip. She also thanked Dave Hodgkinson for his technical support and advice and for running the Election of Officers part of this meeting. Thanks also to Rosie Perham for work on the second St. Edmunds' Way sign.

With very helpful pictures some year highlights were reviewed, including the New Year's Day Walk, Pancake Day Walk, the Spring Break in Minehead, the London trip, the Long Summer Walk, the Wells Seaside trip and the Quiz.

It was very encouraging that we have three new walk leaders, two of whom recently completed the new on-line training recently introduced. However, it was stressed that our walks programme, while helped by several leaders, is over-dependent on a few leaders who are in danger of burn out. We need more leaders or even more member suggestions of viable car parks and walk ideas that could be developed. A walk training event is to be held at the Southgate Centre on November 12th and we hope this will be well supported.

We still need a volunteer or two to lead the 2025 New Year's Day Walk – the 2024 walk was local to Bury and had a short and a medium walk from the same venue.

The Quiz was very successful but it is hoped that the next one sees those interested booking a tad earlier next time as this year's was nearly cancelled as many people booked at very short notice.

When Val concluded her report, Rosie briefly showed the St. Edmunds Way plaque being displayed at Manningtree Station. A smaller version of this plaque is also displayed at Flatford Mill. Rosie thanked Heather for keeping a check on the plaque at the Brandon end of the walk.

6 Membership Report- Chris Flood reported that membership over the last few years has been relatively stable, with membership currently at 367, with 16 affiliates.

7 Treasurer's Report – Mark Broughton presented the AGM Treasurer's Report which summaries the Social Account and the Main Account as at the 30 September 2024 financial year end. Mark expressed his thanks to Ralph Brighton who has signed off both the Annual Report (sent to Ramblers Area), and the AGM Report. Ralph has also agreed to continue as Account Examiner for a further year.

Mark reminded the meeting that the Main Account is funded by a small subsidy from Ramblers, and the Social Account is self-funded. The requirement to restrict the Social Account "free float" to less than £1,500 was discussed, including the need for Bury group to reduce its £1,771.57 free float early in the New Year. The solution, agreed at Committee in October and outlined to the meeting, is to subsidise the New Year dinner by £5 per head. In addition, the Chair advised that some money can be made available to fund refunds, in cases where members were forced to cancel attendance through adverse circumstances such as ill health.

A vote on The Treasurer's Report (with thanks to Mark and Ralph), was carried unanimously – proposed by Tom Berry and seconded by Paul Harrison.

8 Group Footpath Secretaries Reports -Thanks from the Chair to both Lynne Bambury and Jenny Bradin for a great deal of work on our behalf. Lynne and Jenny both reported on the screen with maps, diagrams and key points. For more detail see the website.

Lynne's report included details on the proposed controversial Glem Valley Solar Farm near Boxford and on continuing problems with Denham FP 10, Rougham FP 36, Westley FP1 and Bury FP7. We don't know as yet what is happening to the application to build 485 houses next to Westley village. Problems solved or improving included Rickinghall FP 22, Wickhambrook FP 10, Bury FP 6, Bury FP 9 and Wickhambrook Bridleway 31.

Jenny pointed out that Suffolk CC had a new Rights of Way team who were very helpful, but some landowners were uncooperative which resulted in delays and complications. She was able to report that the bridge at Ixworth Abbey was due to be opened during our AGM. The Suffolk Coastal Path is to be part of the King Charles 111's England Coast Path, though more signs still need changing as a result of this.

Jenny reported also on Hepworth FP's 10 and 11, Mellis Common and Cowpasture Lane and level crossing, West Row footpath claim, Great Barton FP 21, Ingham FP's 2 and 7 and also that Ampton Bridge is still closed but discussions were taking place with the landowners with regard to the bridge being repaired.

The Gislingham situation continues, with the government currently backing National Grid proposals despite objections from the County Councils of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk.

As regards Suffolk Area Council, Jenny reported that although it was helpful to meet with other Footpath Officers, most meetings are currently on Zoom.

9 Appointment Area Council representative: Jenny Bradin elected unanimously; Proposed – Baz Sheen; Seconded – Paul Harrison.

10 Appt. of Examiner of Accounts: Ralph Brighton elected unanimously. Proposed - Richard Stammers; Seconded- Dawn Roberts.

11 Election of Officers and Committee: Chair – Val Conaboy elected unanimously. Proposed – Rosie Perham; Seconded – Cath Anderson.

The other remaining committee members were voted en bloc: Chris Flood, Sue Hawthorn, Mark Broughton, Tom Berry, Lynne Bambury, Jenny Bradin and Tony Rowe. Proposed – Dawn Roberts; Sec – Paul Harrison. Elected unanimously.

12 A.O.B. Rosie Perham thanked the committee for all their work over the preceding twelve months on behalf of the meeting.

Meeting closed 12.45.