

LODDON VALLEY RAMBLERS

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 15th November 2017 at Barkham Village Hall starting at 7.30pm.

1 APOLOGIES

The meeting was attended by 51 people. Apologies were received from Stephen V.

2 MINUTES OF MEETING

(i) The minutes of the last AGM held on 16th November 2016 were adopted.

Proposed by Graham C.

Seconded by John G.

The meeting approved the minutes.

ii) There were no matters arising.

3 REPORTS

Chairman

Graham S reported as follows:

“My first task tonight must, as ever, be to thank Judith for organising our AGM and, of course, everyone who provided food, which I am sure we are all looking forward to attacking. Sadly Judith is, of course, leaving us shortly to move near her daughter and family in Northumberland. Judith, you will be badly missed but we all wish you well ‘oop north’ and thank you for your great contribution to LVR over the years as a committee member and a walk leader.

It has always seemed odd to me that at our AGM we do not hear from the Walks Organiser, the person responsible for our raison d’etre, walking. Therefore I have asked David to speak to you after me so I won’t cover his ground.

It has been a busy year, as usual. We began in January with the Leaders Dinner which most people enjoyed but unfortunately Cantley House Hotel let David down again as their new marquee was inadequately heated and some diners froze. In 2018 we are moving to Sand Martins Golf Club and Martin L has kindly agreed to organise it.

On 7th April the quiz at California Ratepayers Hall was its usual success, as was the July BBQ on a beautiful summer evening held here in the adjacent field but with this hall providing table and chairs, and available for catering and in case of inclement weather. It is booked again for next year. Judith expertly organised both those events. Also, we staffed a stall at the Wokingham May Fayre again; thanks Bobbi.

Turning to our weekends and holidays, Clovelly in April was a tremendous success arranged by Lynda and John L assisted by other walk leaders. In September more than 50 of us were at HF in Church Stretton for excellent walking (though the Saturday could have been drier!) and evening fellowship led by Richard H. Next April we look forward to HF, Abingworth Hall on the South Downs which Gerry C is organising with about 40 already booked in. And then in June 2018 we have John G’s seven days holiday in the Spanish village of Biescas in the Pyrenees staying in a lovely hotel, with a range of guided walks available. In September 2018 Grant K and Carmel H are arranging a weekend at HF, Lulworth Cove. So much to anticipate and many thanks to all our holiday organisers.

We have not yet replaced Ray S as Footpaths Secretary. He clearly did too good a job and frightened everyone off! But Ray has generously continued to field some WBC and planning issues with Derek picking up others. There have been some changes in our team of Footpath Officers but they have continued to function well. I believe they recently all met at Helen T’s house to compare notes. And there have also been some footpath clearance working parties. Incidentally, we now have a supply of Rambler “Path Improvement Plaques” to display when work is done.

As many of know, LVR has a stile replacement and metal kissing gate installation team whose expertise is the envy of Berkshire Area. It is spearheaded by David M and Graham C, advised by Ray and with several of us providing the labour. Three gates were installed at Wargrave on 24th March funded by East Berks Ramblers Book Fund and Berkshire Area; then in June, two gates were installed together with a small bridge repair at Shinfield. LVR now owns many of the necessary tools including a large, nearly new 2-stroke brush cutter/trimmer sold to us at a very advantageous price by Ray and 100% paid for by a grant which I obtained from Ramblers HQ! We had, of course, also purchased a second-hand Cable Detector and Signal Generator for about £400, which is necessary for detecting any underground cables and which hitherto we had had to hire locally and return the same day. But the Area kindly purchased this off us to be an asset available to other Berkshire Groups though we retain possession. And guess what, no one else has yet borrowed it! David and Graham have been accredited on a training course to use this kit and brush cutters, which the Local Authority requires. And they do assist other Groups to replace stiles with metal gates.

David T has for several years been LVR's representative on the Berkshire Area Committee – a happier task since meetings transferred to The Swan pub at Three Mile Cross! But also for quite some time David has done sterling work in arranging first aid courses for the whole of the Area which he continues to do. Well done, David!

Some months ago we decided to update a publicity leaflet that was originally produced several years ago. A key intention was to give it to residential housing developers on the myriad of sites around Wokingham to put in the packs they give to new home owners. Via Richard H's close contacts with Shinfield Parish Council they agreed to pay for production if we included their logo and a short attribution on the leaflet. We had a couple of attempts at getting the leaflet right but it now looks excellent as I hope you agree if we pass them round.

In the summer I was approached by a scoutmaster in Wargrave, to ask if LVR would lead a short walk for his cubs one evening. We were happy to agree though only after checking with Ramblers HQ about safeguarding issues - how sad that such things impact these days! We were OK so long as scout leaders or parents had responsibility for the children and they had insurance. So all was fine and Jo F agreed to organise a 2 miles walk in Charvil Country Park assisted by Dougal M, Karen D and I on 4th and 6th June. The 22 cubs of both sexes seemed far more interested in running around, fighting and throwing stones into the lakes than listening to us! But we spotted several herons and, I think, created much goodwill. I offered a repeat next year if they wish.

The annual re-walk of the Wokingham Way took place in late spring. The Tuesday walkers kindly offered to walk the two longest double stages as part of their normal programme, which the steering group appreciated. However, the task did slow them down and also several steering group members missed walking the whole route so in 2018 will take back the full task. Very few, and only slight, amendments to directions were necessary and few roundels needed replacing. At Amen Corner the route goes through the Bellway development site and we approached the authorities to ask whether a site road could be named "Wokingham Way" but sadly street names have already been allocated and are inviolate!

Jo F keeps the LVR website updated and looking good – thank you, Jo. Unfortunately the website was hacked in June with spurious references to various watches, and the website host has been unable to provide any information on how this happened. So Jo is considering a change of site host.

It has been a huge pleasure for me to work with a really dedicated and extremely pleasant group of committee members. I think the membership has been fortunate indeed to have them in post. We do have vacancies as Ray has retired, Judith is departing and, of course, I am stepping down after completing the 3 years in the chair which I said at the outset that I would do. Your committee introduced themselves earlier and I have commended many of them during my report. Apologies to any I have not specifically mentioned but please be assured it is not for any lack of appreciation, merely time and space!

To conclude, a couple of dates for you:

Saturday, 25th November at 2pm is the Berkshire Area AGM which East Berks are organising. And David M will be demonstrating the Cat Scanner and talking about installing metal kissing gates.

Sunday, 17th December, do join me for the annual mulled wine and mince pie walk from Mortimer and eat and drink in a Roman Amphitheatre!

And now, two final thanks: To all of you for giving me the joy and privilege of chairing LVR. And to Karen, my rock, who is a very busy lady herself as many of you know but is always there for me in every way.”

Walks Organiser

David M reported as follows:

He asked the walk leaders present to stand and make themselves known. Notwithstanding the significant number that stood, we now have 60 leaders – but we always need more to cover both attrition and the increasing programme of walks that are provided.

The Ramblers have always had the focus of keeping Rights of Way open. Whilst U3A walks groups might charge £6 to £8, and WBC Health walks are free, it is The Ramblers Association that keeps footpaths and bridleways etc open often resorting to legal means on obstructions.

Average attendance statistics at walks over the last year are as follows:

- Sunday Short Walks – 19
- Sunday Long Walks – 8
- Thursday Walks – 33
- Tuesday Walks – 16 (with thanks to Richard H for co-ordinating).

In addition we have recently had Thursday (easier) Walks and 2 Historical Walks (with thanks to Sally B).

Considering the number of participants on over 150 walks in the year, we have achieved 21,500 “ Rambler Miles” equivalent to London to Melbourne and back – impressive!

The Walk Leaders` Dinner and Dance on Friday 12th January 2018 is being organised by Martin L.

Thanks are due to Graham C and Martin L for providing links to facilitate putting the Walk Proposals on to a spreadsheet which will reduce the burden of the Walks Organiser.

Finally David wished Nick J well as the new Walks Organiser.

Treasurer

Kath P presented her report for the financial year starting 1st October 2016 and finishing 30th September 2017

The balance sheet and a breakdown of the receipts and payments are given as an appendix to these minutes

Adoption of accounts was:

Proposed by Karen D.

Seconded by David T.

The meeting approved the accounts for the year ending 30th September 2017.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Chairman:

Nomination - David M.

Proposed by Graham S.

Seconded by Derek S.

The meeting approved the election of David M as Chairman.

Walks Organiser:

Nomination - Nick J.

Proposed by Graham S.

Seconded by Derek S.

The meeting approved the election of Nick J as Walks Organiser.

There were no nominations for Footpath & Countryside Officer or for Social Secretary and these remain open for members to offer their services.

All other committee members stood for re-election.

There were no other nominations for the committee so the existing members were approved en bloc.

Proposed by Pat P.

Seconded by Ray S.

The meeting approved the re-election of the committee.

4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bobbi G informed those present that members of LVR would again be decorating our sponsored tree for the Wokingham Methodist Church Festival of Christmas Trees in December with the theme of "Angels."

David M advised the meeting that there was a form at the back of the hall for members to tick their preferred option from the list of suggestions received for the Spring 2018 Social Event.

There being no further business the formal meeting closed at approximately 8.25pm.

5 GUEST SPEAKER

Following refreshments, John H (Bell Tower Captain at All Saints Church, Wokingham) gave a talk on "Local Heritage."

Appendix 1 – Treasurer’s Report

Receipts & Payments

1st October 2016 – 30th September 2017

MAIN ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Area Funding	2346	Newsletter	1002
Practical Work (Area/East Berks)	1303	Meetings	392
“ “ (Local)	761	Leader Training	225
“ “ (CO)	100	Publicity	176
Advert Sales	120	Practical Work	2737
Walking Partnership	430	Admin	39
Book Sales	29		
Assoc Membership	6		
RECEIPTS	5095	PAYMENTS	4571
Surplus/Deficit	524		

SELF FUNDED ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Day Walks	1446	Day Walks	1480
Holidays	20987	Holidays	20528
Socials	2373	Socials	2882
Other	0	Other	38
RECEIPTS	24806	PAYMENTS	24928
Surplus/Deficit	-122		

Total Receipts	29901	Total Payments	29499
Surplus for Year	402		

Bank Reconciliation

Opening Bank Balance @ 1st Oct 2016	3390.54	Main Acc	1296.49
		S/F Acc	<u>2094.05</u>
			3390.54
Total Receipts for the year (Main & S/F)	29899.61		
Total Payments for the year (Main & S/F)	-29499.55		
Closing Bank Balance @30th Sept 2017	<u>3790.60</u>	Main Acc	1818.80
		S/F Acc	<u>1971.80</u>
			3790.60

Payments in Advance

Deposit paid Leaders Dinner 2018	200.00
Deposit paid Abingworth	306.00
Deposit paid BBQ 2018	<u>30.00</u>
	<u>536.00</u>
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Holiday Fellowship Membership Club	<u>101.42</u>