

Stockport Ramblers AGM Monday 18th November 2024 held at The Railway Rose Hill Marple

Meeting start time 19.05pm

In attendance; Duncan Challen, Christine Bell, James Horan, Jeanne Todd, Sue Adamson, Lynne Thorley, Sarah Hubbard, Roger Hubbard, Phil Featherstone, Dave Sidgewick, Angela Featherstone, Terry Barnes, Tony Blockley, Mike Offord, Bill Redfern, Barry Mc Cabe, Pete Worsley, Derek Downes, Jane Downes, Julia Mansfield.

Item 1 Chairs opening address

- Welcome everybody to our AGM. It doesn't seem 12 months since our last AGM and in fact it isn't (January 25th this year was our last). We have bought the AGM meeting into line with the Executive meetings, Christine and I are away for the majority of December and January on holidays.

I would like to thank the committee for all their work over the last year. Christine our Secretary, Theresa our Treasurer, Shelia our Social Co-ordinator, Chris Membership Secretary, Phil and Edgar Footpath Officers and the walk co-ordinators, Diana, Julia, Lesley, Lynne and myself.

I was formally appointed the Chair of Stockport Ramblers at the AGM meeting on the 25th January 2024. The previous Chair, Dave, had stepped down on the 21st November 2022. The club had operated with no Chair for nearly 12 months.

My position was to be for 3 months to try and stabilise the group as the Secretary, Marie, had also stepped down. A new committee was formed to try and implement all the changes that the Ramblers were introducing.

This year has been challenging and a steep learning curve for me. Two main factors have taken place that have required a lot of time. The new computer system rollout and the new walks leader's guidance, both seemed to cause our members some concern.

We held a committee meeting on the 22nd July, following an EC meeting, to address these points and also the of number of walks being offered and the declining numbers attending walks. All the walk leaders, past and present were invited which resulted in 35 members attending with 7 apologies a fantastic response. An action plan was proposed and many thanks to everybody who offered to lead walks again. I have had tremendous support from the Walking Experience team at the Ramblers and in particular Kate Davis who assisted me over a couple of weeks to ensure all our walks leaders had the correct authorities registered on the main files. This allowed the publication of walks to be much more professional. Thank you, Kate, your work was of great assistance.

We also looked at our membership numbers, 521. It was encouraging to see 64 new members in the last year but disappointing to note 63 had left. 23 had transferred to other groups. A lot of work needs to be done on retention of new members and the offerings we have. Chris Robson has come into the role of Membership Secretary to work on this area.

Thanks goes to Diana Horrocks, Julia Mansfield, Lesley Williams, Lynne Thorley, Christine Bell and me for co-ordinating the walks. We are monitoring all walk numbers to try and offer an appealing programme for members and guests. Again, thanks to Diana for her role as Facebook co-ordinator and our new committee member Chris Robson.

Before we continue with our meeting can we take a moment to stand, if you are able, to remember our club members who sadly passed away this year,

Geoff Holland

Item 2 Apologies for absence:

Diana Horrocks, Roy Gatley, David berry, Graeme Ritchie, Paul Clear, Hilary Lowe, Theresa Russell, Stephen Ridge, Matina Riley, Chris Robson, Angie Bryant, Nigel Larnar, Lesley Williams, Edgar Ernstbrunner, Chris Mullin, Ruth Mullin, Ann Whitehead, Nigel larnar, Sue Stephenson, Gwen Sidgewick, Sheila Horgan, Magaret Horan.

Item 3 The minutes of last year's AGM

The Minutes of last year's AGM have been posted on the website and a few copies are available in the room tonight. I trust that you have taken the opportunity to read the minutes previously or if not have managed to read them this evening. If you agree that they are an accurate reflection of the meeting, may I have a Proposer and secondar to that effect.

Proposer: Jane Downes

Seconder: Dave Sidgewick

All in favour: passed unanimously

Item 4 Matters Arising

Matters arising from the minutes.

None

Item 5 Reports

The committee members reports have also been added to the website and again a few copies are available in the room. I will not be asking the members to read out the reports but will ask for the Treasurer to run through our financial position and take any related questions. Our treasurer Theresa is unable to be here tonight. I will try and answer any questions.

Treasure's Report

Stockport Ramblers Balance Sheet/Treasurers Report Year Ending 30th September 2024

Treasurers Report

The annual returns have been completed, independently reviewed by Jim Horan and submitted to the Area Treasurer.

Group Funds

Our standard allocation of group funds have reduced slightly this year in line with our membership numbers. We have requested additional funds for the new financial year 2024 / 2025 these are intended to be used to encourage / enable / support new walk leaders to come onboard.

Last year we advertised the availability of funds to support recce costs that are incurred in the set up of a walk to facilitate leaders who may otherwise be unable to undertake these activities. These are claimable after the group walk has taken place – we have had very few claims for these expenses.

Social Funds

There is a small historical positive balance in the social funds.

Name:	Stockport	Year ended:	30/09/24		
Code:	MIR06				
Cashbook reconciliation					
		Main	Self-funded	Total	
Opening balance		1,434.42	704.63	2,139.05	[A]
Surplus/(deficit) on R&P		-185.11	1,687.67	1,502.56	[B]
Closing balance (rows A + B + C)		1,249.31	2,392.30	3,641.61	[C]
Closing balances	Cash	Bank	Total		Variance
(please give breakdowns below)	-	3,641.61	3,641.61	[D]	-
[C] - [D]					

Secretary's Report

It has been another busy year organising meetings, sending communications on behalf of the committee and social team, collating all the response to the varied emails. I also attended the executive meetings, which as always prove to be a useful source of information as to what the other groups are doing. We also get updates on what is happening nationally along with the many campaigns The Ramblers get involved with.

We still struggle to recruit additional volunteers especially to help run socials. This means other committee members double up on their own roles to help. Jane and Derek have been a huge help using their expertise from previous socials they managed for several years. It's been great to have them onboard this year and many of us enjoyed the trips to Anglesey and the HF weekend and now we all look forward to the Christmas Meal. Thank you, Jane and Derek.

The website which I update is a useful first point of contact for new members and existing members find the walks finder easy to navigate.

I have been working closely with the chair to action the many changes that have been implemented by The Ramblers and dealing with the corresponding communications that arise.

I will be attending the Manchester AGM and hope more people from Stockport will join me for the latest updates and to air any views you may have. There is a planned short walk in Manchester followed by the meeting.

Footpath Officers Report

Stockport AGM Report Nov 2024 (Phil Featherstone & Edgar Ernstbrunner)

On the whole we continue to have a good working relationship with this Authority, in particular with the ROW Officer as well as officers managing the Local Access Forum (LAF). Both the ROW Forum and the LAF are running quite smoothly.

There has been no opportunity for assisted funding on ROW improvements. Oddly, SMBC didn't seem to be interested in receiving contributions to resolving issues such as 41HGB with a steep muddy section that would benefit from steps being installed).

DMMO Register. A mixed bag: On the one hand we do have a S.53 register with a fair level of detail. But there is a separate "DMMO register", i.e. a register of other path orders modifying the Definitive Map & Statement (diversions and extinguishments), that did however, when last viewed, also include a claim that should have gone into the other register – which, in any case, was found to be incomplete. So, a work in progress, but a definite improvement.

DMMO Progress: (Repeat from last year:) *"It is still the case that many DMMOs on the register have been sitting there for many years, mostly not even decided (or decided to approve more than 5 years ago, but still being drafted by Legal. We keep being told that some decisions are imminent, though..."*. In fact, not a single S.53 Order has come through.

Ongoing longer-term path problem:

Footpath 117 Stockport (off Offerton Road): The resident at Yewtree Farm installed a massive decorative gate across the path, over a year ago. We still haven't had a response whether the gate is licensed but owing to its design it would be an unlawful obstruction even if it were. Between PNFS and us we'll have to decide whether to recommend legal action. (Unchanged from last year)

Gating Orders / Public Spaces Protection Orders

There are two Public Footpaths that have been subject to 24/7 closure for many years – at Seal Road, Bramhall (in part) and at Bilson Drive, Edgeley (in its entirety). We raised these at the most recent LAF and ROW Forum, asking for urgent review (under the new administration) and were told that this was indeed planned. But no commitment or date.

Stockport Path Survey: See last year's report. There has been some fitful progress – long lulls, then a bunch of (actually very useful) reports, followed by more long lulls. And one of the original inspectors has, sadly, passed away recently. So currently this isn't looking very promising. We're persisting, but it could take quite a lot longer than originally anticipated. Anyone wishing help with this project would be very welcome

Definitive Map & Statement reconsolidation: We've been told that work on this is ongoing but haven't seen a timetable. At least, in contrast to all other GM Authorities, SMBC are addressing this issue (which actually is less onerous than elsewhere since the current DM&S are much more recent – 2013 – than anywhere else in Greater Manchester, let alone the High Peak).

Walks Coordinators Report

Walks Report - November 2024

2024 Walks Programme - 160 walks published on Stockport Ramblers Website

Day	Number of Walks	Comments
Tuesday Long	25	
Tuesday Short	25	
Saturday	47	
Sunday	35	
Wednesday Evening	13	May-Aug
Weekend away walks	12	Across 3 weekends away
Misc short walks	3	Boxing Day + 2 wellbeing walks

- 3 weekends away (Harrogate, Anglesey and HF Church Stretton), each was well attended and enjoyed by all, thank you to Sheila, Roy, Derek and Jane for organising them.
- Wednesday evening walks not as well attended as in previous years, may have been affected by poor weather in early summer
- Ramblers are promoting wellbeing walks, we are trialling a couple of shorter more accessible walks in current programme, 3-4 miles in length. (One from Brabyns Park in October and one around Audenshaw in November)
- Couple of 'figure of 8' walks in the current programme, two loops returning to start at lunchtime, option to complete just one or both loops, so providing 'B' and 'C' walk options within the one walk.

Attendance on walks – Have data from end July, below based on 23rd July to end 31st Oct only.

- Tracking number of Stockport Ramblers, number from other ramblers groups and number of guests.
 - 489 walkers in total in 3 the months, (424 Stockport Ramblers, 16 guests and 49 from other Rambler groups)
 - Most popular walks are Tuesday Pub Lunch walks
 - Generally, have lower numbers on the longer walks

Walk	Number of walks	Number of walkers		
		Maximum	Minimum	Average
Tuesday Short	8	23	5	15
Sunday 'C'	9	18	1	11
Wednesday Evening	3	11	8	10
Saturday 'B'	12	13	4	9
Tuesday Long	7	12	5	8
Saturday 'Figure of 8'	1	12	12	12
Shorter more accessible	1	5	5	5

Trialling change to structure of weekend walks programme

- Walk leaders meeting held 15th August 2024 where it was a proposal to trial a change to weekend walk programme was agreed.
 - Weekly 'C' walks on Saturday one week and Sunday the next
 - Longer (and shorter) walks would be fitted in the programme around the 'C' walks.
 - No change to Tuesday Walk programme (alternating between long and short pub walks)
- Looking to plan walks and add to website further ahead, aim to have 6 months visibility of walks on the website.
- Have some gaps in the programme currently with a number of weekends without a 'C' walk

Looking forward to 2025

- ***Need more walk leaders***, especially for 'C' walks (Saturday and Sunday)
- Should we have a walk leader "training day" to support new leaders?
- Have 2 weekends away planned, Morecambe in May, Llandudno in August

Social Report

We have had a full social programme. I organised the Christmas evening meal at Benvenuti Hazel Grove enjoyed by 25 members.

The summer social was arranged by Ursula Gallagher at Topkapi Hazel Grove. 18 members attended an excellent meal.

28th-30th June we enjoyed a two-night trip to Anglesey organised by Derek and Jane Downes. We offered two walks on the Saturday and one walk on the Sunday. They also arranged two evenings meals at a local pub and Indian restaurant. 20 members attended.

13th-16th September the offering was a 3-night stay at HF Longmynd, Church Stretton and again organised by Jane and Derek Downes. 20 members enjoyed the offering of 2 walks on the Saturday, 2 walks on the Sunday and 1 walk on the Monday.

24th November Shelia Horgan has arranged 2 walks on the Sunday with a meal at the Norfolk Arms afterwards.

The 2024 Christmas meal has been booked at the Crown and Conspirator, Bramhall, currently 25 members wishing to attend. Thanks again to the Jane and Derek team.

It is still noticeable from a group as large as Stockport that the committee and additional volunteers is still far too small. This year I have come across the phrase so many times 'this is how we have always done it' Technology and the framework has been developed by the Ramblers, but a few members seen unwilling to adopt the new ideas. We have a fantastic team of walk leaders who are all wishing to assist. We need to embrace this and move the club forward bringing members and new ideas into the fold. This way the group will flourish and set a great framework for years to come.

Finally, and most importantly, if we didn't have members willing to lead us through our wonderful countryside none of this would be possible. We are fortunate that we do.

Walk leaders, you know who you are, I do, Thank you.

Social events already planned for 2025

Spring Bank holiday, we have a 3-night stay in Morecombe. Thanks to the walk leaders, Angie, Pete, Roay and Lesley for making the weekend possible.

The second weekend we go back to Llandudno in August. Thanks again to the walk leaders, Angie, Pete, Roy, Lesley and me.

Item 6 Notice of motions

We have received no notice of motions.

Item 7 Appointment of Auditor.

Jim Horan has kindly agreed to audit the accounts for this financial year and this was approved by all those present.

Item 8 Election of Officers.

I will read through the positions we have nominations for.

Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Theresa Russell
Membership Secretary	Vacant
Social Co-ordinator	Vacant
Web Master	Christine Bell
Walks Manager	Lesley Williams
Walks Manager	Diana Horricks
Footpath Officer	Phil Featherstone
Footpath Officer	Edgar Ernstbrunner

All positions were unanimously voted through by all those present.

Item 9 Any other Business.

Sarah Hubbard asked for confirmation if a social event was contributed would it be possible for emails to go out. Christine replied that if she has access to the membership emails this would be possible. The only proviso was that the email be typed with the requisite details and an email provided by the organiser for responses.

Sarah also asked about walks being entered on the Walks finder. It was suggested that help could be requested through the walk leaders' what's app and one of the walks managers would then volunteer to enter the walks on behalf of a walk leader.

Item 10 Date of next meeting

to be decided by the new Committee.

Thank you all for attending, the meeting is now closed at 20.20