

Stockport Ramblers AGM Thursday 25th January held at the Railway Rose Hill Marple.

Meeting Start time 19.10pm

In Attendance: Duncan Challen Christine Bell, Roy Gatley, Sheila Horgan, Rose Kehoe, Jane Hankinson, Phil Featherstone, Dave Sidgewick, Jane Downes, Derek Downes, Terry Barnes, Stephen Lewis, Liz Dwason, Diana Horrocks, Wilma Milton, Theresa Russell. Hilary Kendall, Ray Gibbons, Jim Horan, Chris Robson, Sarah Hubbard, Roger Hubbard, Bill Redfern, Pete Worsley, Nigel Lerner, Karen Lerner, Lynne Thorley, Julia Mansfield, John Ireland (Area Gen Sec) Margaret Manning (Area Chair).

Item 1 Opening address from the acting chair Duncan Challen.

Welcome everybody to our AGM, and a special welcome to Margaret Manning and John Ireland from the Manchester Executive committee. They both have given Christine and I so much needed help and guidance over the last few months. If any questions are raised later that I cannot answer, I will ask the experts for assistance.

I am the acting chair for this meeting.

I would like to thank the committee for all their work over the last year, Marie who has now stepped down as our secretary. Theresa our treasurer, and the social team consisting of Christine, Sheila, and myself.

The social events have proven popular again.

We have visited Elan Valley, Llandudno and a team walked Hadrian's Wall
Two visits to Benvenuti restaurant in Hazel Grove, one being the Christmas meal and two pie and mash walks.

The committee decided that the walks co-ordinator role would be split into 5 different roles to spread the workload. Thanks to

Julia Mansfield: Saturday walks

Diana Horrocks: Long Tuesday walks

Lynne Thorley: Sunday walks

Lesley Williams: Short Tuesday walks with an optional pub lunch

Christine and Duncan: Wednesday evening walks

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.

Phil Featherstone and Edgar Ernstbrunner for their continued work within the footpath officer roles.

Diana Horrocks for your work as the Facebook co-ordinator.

The Greater Manchester ringway was officially opened this year and I am proud that we lead 3 of the 20 available walks, stages 6,7 and 8, that pass-through Stockport, during the Greater Manchester festival of walking week. Many thanks go to Keith Povey, Diana Horrocks and me for leading the walks.

The National Ramblers Association this year commissioned a new computer system. This required every group in the country to cleanse its computer records. (Job roles, titles, and authority levels). These had to match precisely with the National data bank files ready for the switchover. At the same time every walk leader had to update their own personal records on the data files. The switchover date arrived, and many files did not transfer over. The Ramblers Association left it with each individual group to complete the task which is proving to be a cumbersome exercise. We are working hard to finish the task.

The support teams are assisting Christine and I. What I need to stress is that we need every member to review your own details on Assemble. We can only use the information that is held centrally.

Thanks to Christine who has set up the new website which will allow us to give more information about our group and the forthcoming walks.

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,

Ian Worsley
Jim Quigley

Item 2 Apologies for absence.

David Berry, George Walker, Susan and Stephen Hyslop, Elizabeth Nott, Hilary Lowe, Graeme Ritchie, Ruth Lewis, Lesley Williams, Sarah Murray, Gwen Sidgewick, Phil Hayward, Tony Blockley.

Item 3 Minutes of last years 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. If you agree that they are an accurate reflection of the meeting, may I have a Proposer and secondar to that effect.

Proposer: Diana Horrocks Seconder: Derek Downes

All those in favour: Passed unanimously.

Item 4 Matters arising.

Marie has added a section showing the matters arising and what actions have been taken.

Are there any other points:

Sarah Hubbard asked for availability of First Aid Kits for the walk leaders.

Chair to update walk coordinators and walk leaders.

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.

Treasurer, Theresa Russell.

Annual returns completed and reviewed by Tony Blockley. Submitted to the area treasurer on time. Over last financial year SR funds increased slightly due to increase in membership numbers, and we have used some of the funds to purchase first aid kits, Go outdoors renewal, room hire etc. Social Funds and activities balanced. Full report is available on the website. Reminder that recce cost of 45p mile can be submitted, after the actual walk has taken place. The Treasurer holds a claim form for such expenses incurred.

Question: Can train fares be claimed for recce? Yes, it is an allowable expense, please keep your tickets.

Name:	Stockport	Year ended:	30/09/23		
Code:	MR06				
Cashbook reconciliation					
		Main	Self-funded	Total	
Opening balance		1,539.82	2,089.63	3,629.45	[A]
Surplus/(deficit) on R&P		-105.40	-1,385.00	-1,490.40	[B]
Closing balance (rows A + B + C)		1,434.42	704.63	2,139.05	[C]
Closing balances (please give breakdowns below)	Cash	Bank	Total	[D]	Variance
	-	2,139.05	2,139.05		-

Social report – Christine Bell

Wycliffe Hotel Annual Christmas Meal 8th Dec 2022

Once again 36 Stockport Ramblers had an enjoyable meal with excellent service at the Wycliffe.

Winter Pie and Mash walk 4th Feb 2023.

We decided to have a change from the annual hot pot walks and instead enjoyed a Pie and Mash meal at the Navigation Inn Buxworth. Two walks were led by Derek Downes and Duncan Challen.

23rd May Elan Valley weekend

36 People enjoyed a weekend away at the Elan Valley Lodge in Wales. This was all-inclusive weekend with excellent food and accommodation. The walks were led by two experienced local walk leaders with a wealth of experience of the area's history as well as providing excellent walks on both Saturday and Sunday.

Weeklong walking experience 17th June 2023

Hadrian's wall was the 7-day choice for this year's week away. Roy Gatley did a splendid job in leading the walks every day to complete the length of the wall.

22nd June Summer social.

22 Stockport ramblers enjoyed a Summer's evening visit to Benvenuti in Hazel Grove. The staff provided great service and food.

8th September Weekend away Llandudno

An enjoyable weekend with fantastic weather was booked by 28 people most of whom stayed at The White Heather Hotel, Sheila organised an optional meal on the Friday night. Christine organised a meal for 22 people at the renowned Cottage Loaf for the Saturday night.

There were walks on Friday, two walks on Saturday and a walk on Sunday. Led by Roy, Lesley Williams assisted by Rose Kehoe, Peter Worsley, and Derek Downes. Huge thanks go to the walk leaders for giving up their time to make pre visits to the area to do the recce for the weekend walks. We couldn't do weekends without you!

Social plans for 2023/24

We need more help to keep our social calendar on track for 2023/24. The social committee has gone from some 10/12 volunteers to the current three volunteers. Who have worked very hard to fulfil as many commitments as possible this season. Please come onboard and help keep the social scene alive as enjoyed by so many. Once again thank you to all the walk leaders that have helped provide the support to the social Committee.

Shelia Horgan, Social Coordinator

Social events already planned.

April: Harrogate Sheila Horgan

Summer: Anglesey Break, Derek Downes

HF Holiday: Jane Downes

Appeal for help with Social Events To keep the social section of Stockport Ramblers active. We need help with organising events, mainly Weekend and meal walks, Summer social and Christmas social.

Walks Co-ordinators' report - October 2023 Contributions to report from Diana Horrocks, Dave Sidgwick, Julia Mansfield, Lynne Thorley

- Some beautiful walks enjoyed throughout the year
- We've had quite a few people join our walks from other regions who were holidaying in the area
- Numbers generally slightly lower than in the past
- Not enough walks being submitted so some people end up having to add a number of walks themselves to fill gaps
- Not enough walk leaders
- As ever, poor weather reduces numbers and fair weather increases numbers!
- Walks in local areas get higher numbers. People don't seem to want to travel too far and particularly to north /west Manchester or Derbyshire.
- Long Tuesday walks have been to Eyam, Marsden, Broadbottom, Monsal Head, Hayfield, Stalybridge, Whaley Bridge and Rowarth. Numbers have generally been fairly small especially during the summer months.

- There has been a suggestion that long Tuesday walks are on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays and Pub lunch walks on 2nd and 4th as this would cause less confusion? What happens when there are 5 Tuesdays?
- It is becoming more difficult to find pubs that are open on a Tuesday!
- We are struggling for Sunday walk leaders, and people who lead longer walks are having to step in to fill the gaps. There is also some confusion over start times for Sunday which needs to be resolved.
- The new Ramblers website has provided some challenges to those people who upload walks as not all walk leaders have authorised their profiles which means their details are not available to be published.
- Should we have a walk leaders “training day” to support new leaders?
- Do we still continue to offer Saturday and Sunday walks every week ?

Secretary’s report - Marie Gilluley

The “new” committee have had a busy year. I took on the secretary’s role from Gwen and soon realised that she did so much more than that, and that I wouldn’t be able to replicate her commitment. I am very grateful to her for her patience during an extended handover.

There have been lots of changes to manage including new email addresses for the committee volunteers; a new website (implemented by Christine Bell) and the new Walk Manager system on the Ramblers website. This proved very tricky to implement but hopefully we got there in the end!

We’ve also procured and distributed First Aid Kits for walk leaders and residential trips, and distributed several hundred ICE (In Case of Emergency) cards so that walkers’ contact details are available to walk leaders should they be required.

We took the decision to change the AGM arrangements for this year to coincide with a Saturday walk and to make it more of a social occasion. This was in the hope that we might attract a wider attendance and so be able to hear from and discuss issues with group members. We will monitor how successful this is.

Since we divided up the walk coordinator’s role across the different days we have 5 coordinators sharing the task which seems to be working well. We would very much appreciate more help with other roles so that our small committee of 5 could share out more of the jobs. There is lots of support and training available from Ramblers, and experienced people who are happy to mentor new volunteers.

I am grateful to all of the people who are quietly helping out in the background and have ensured that the group continues through all the changes. Committee members have attended the Greater Manchester Executive Committee meetings which are quarterly so we keep in touch with the wider area but we don’t have the time or resource to help with much of the campaigning work.

Footpath Officers Report (Phil Featherstone & Edgar Ernstbrunner)

The Authority’s performance in ROW terms has improved significantly and we have developed a good working relationship with the ROW Officer. Unfortunately the Council was not able to take up our offer of (up to) £5000 towards FP improvement works. It is now up to us to specify individual projects they might consider (one example would be 41HGB with a steep muddy section that would benefit from steps being installed).

Definitive Map & Statement: A reconsolidation of these documents (last time was in 2013) has been in the planning stage for some time (note, though, that no other GM authority comes anywhere near SMBC's performance, the only other one being Wigan, and that was in 2008). The 2013 DM&S was known to contain a number of anomalies and possible errors. Our survey has highlighted more of these, and a communication from a landowner in Marple (who consulted us on a possible diversion) brought to light, yet another administrative error SMBC had apparently been unaware of but have since acknowledged. It's a rare case of a PROW correctly shown on the OS map but left off the Definitive Map.

DMMO Register. At the latest LAF we were pleasantly surprised to be informed that a reasonably compliant register now exists for Claims for new paths and upgrades (later confirmed on the website). Skeleton information required to be available for each claim has now been made available online (at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/section-53-register>). But still only five claims are listed there (all as "new claims", even though they were all submitted years ago), and the details required statutorily have not all been provided yet. We also know that the Register is incomplete, as (for example) Phil Featherstone's claim for a FP in the Ladybrook Valley, which years ago he was told would be resolved by dedication, still is not shown. But it will now be difficult to establish whether other claims have been lost or are still waiting to be listed (e.g. because there has been no decision whether or not an Order is to be made).

There's also a separate Path Orders Register (for diversions and extinguishments).

DMMO Progress: This remains wholly unsatisfactory. Again and again we find "Report being written" in the Status column, with no dates mentioned or set. Or we have Committee decisions to make the Order, 7 years ago, and Legal are supposedly still drafting the Order. No Order has been made, let alone confirmed, over the last 6 months. But we keep being told that some decisions are imminent.

Ongoing longer-term path problems:

a) Footpath 119 Stockport: This path, at the start of the Cown Edge Way, has now been largely restored after having been beset by flooding for over 20 years.

b) 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.

Landowner enquiries regarding possible diversions:

- 137M (see previous report): After a site visit we decided we'd object to the proposal as originally submitted. But we haven't heard since.

- 194M (see previous report): A site visit showed the proposed diversion actually to be preferable to the official route. But the landowner then decided that the red tape

(and cost) associated with a formal diversion was just too much, and he was going to put the definitive line back in order.

· 205M: A more complex issue, in that the 2013 Definitive Map consolidation had “lost” part of the footpath as shown online. That cross-field section nevertheless still existed (as confirmed by SMBC), but had been fenced off. A landowner proposed diverting it round the field (doubly fenced). Our final response was to insist on restoration of the original line. Nothing more heard since then.

Stockport Path Survey: The Group started a new FP survey early in 2023 (the last survey was undertaken in 2016). The current survey is aimed at both identifying faults (obstructions, out of repair etc), assessing the accuracy of what’s found on the ground against the Definitive Map, and improving (expanding) the generally far too sparse Statement. Currently there are ten listed volunteers assigned across the various parishes. Progress was slow to start with, then picked up, then virtually stopped, then picked up again (after a reminder), but has now come to a virtual halt again, with only Stockport Urban District and Cheadle & Gatley covered to a significant degree (about half in both cases), about 20 paths in Bredbury & Romiley, about a dozen in Hazel Grove & Bramhall, and virtually nothing (3 paths) in the most challenging district, Marple. Quite a few of these reports did show up major problems, subsequently brought to the attention of the ROW Officer, so this has been of some use – but the main purpose has not so far come even close to being achieved, and we must now reconsider and review options.

Area Footpath Officer: A couple of months ago, we arranged a meeting with the new Area FP Officer Chitra Mouli, a Stockport resident, to help her to become familiar with FP work, including some examples on the ground. She seemed very keen at the time, and still does, so we’re looking forward to work with, and assist, her for years to come.

Stockport Group Committee:

There have been difficulties filling committee roles resulting in a number of resignations. However, it is understood that an effective committee is now in the making. If that will include (as it should) the FP Secretary post, we (Phil & Edgar) will fill it jointly. If it doesn’t we’ll carry on regardless, reporting directly to the Area Footpath Officer.

Item 6 Notice of motions.

We have received no notice of motions prior to the AGM.

John Ireland explained the definition of a motion.

Jim Horan submitted a late entry regarding a recent survey about 36-page document sent to walk leaders. Concerned the document may be putting people off leading walks, very prescriptive, keeping records, risk assessment, checking walkers’ equipment, lot of repetition, felt it was over the top. It didn’t go to everybody and felt it should of done. 2nd email saying the review after consultation will be sent out. Jim

Horan felt the review should go out to all members regardless of if they are a walk leader, so everybody can pass comments on the revised document.
 Motion submitted that the national body should send the draft survey to all members.

Proposed: Jim Horan
 Seconded: Dave Sidgewick
 Passed by members

Item 7 Election of Officers

AGM 25th January 2024 Committee nominations

NAME	ROLE	PROPOSED	SECONDED	
Duncan Challen	Chairman	Sheila Horgan	Phil Featherstone	
Theresa Russell	Treasurer	Rose Kehoe	Jim Horan	
Christine Bell	Secretary	Rose Kehoe	Jane Downes	
	Membership Secretary			
Sheila Horgan	Social Coordinator	Christine Bell	Jane Downes	
Christine Bell	Web Master	Roy Gatley	Diana Horrocks	
Phil Featherstone	Footpath Officer	Diana Horrocks	Roy Gatley	
Edgar Ernstbrunner	Footpath Officer	Jane Hankinson	Sarah Hubbard	
Lesley Williams	Walks Manager	Duncan Challen	Julia Mansfield	

All positions were unanimously voted through.
 The position of membership secretary was vacant.

Item 8 Appointment of Auditor.

Jim Horan has agreed to stand as auditor for this financial year and this was approved by all those present.

Item 9 Any other business.

Prior to the AGM and email was sent asking any member who could not be present or did not wish to stand up at the meeting to submit their question to the Chair to be read out.

The Secretary confirmed no question were received.

Sheila Horgan asked whether an open meeting could be arranged to ensure Stockport Ramblers succession plan was in place.

Chair- It was agreed an open meeting would be called at a later date after Chair and Secretary have familiarised themselves with all the administration processes.

Diana Horrocks would it be possible for the walk coordinators to have a meeting to discuss mentoring and attracting potential new walk leaders and the method of communication between Walk coordinators, walk leaders and members.

Chair- A meeting will be arranged for the walk coordinators to review the administration requirements and continued development of potential new walk leaders.

Margaret Manning Thanked the committee for holding the Stockport group, the second largest in Manchester and High Peak together.

Item 10 Date of next meeting.

The Chair proposed that the committee will set the date for the next AGM at their next committee meeting.

Thank you all for attending, the meeting is now closed at 20.34