

**Ramblers East Cheshire Group**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at**  
**Macclesfield Tennis Club (subject to approval at the AGM 2018)**

There were 36 members that signed the attendance register.

Many thanks to Jane and Frank Gay for organizing the venue and to all those who help and who provided cakes for the after meeting tea.

**Welcome**

The chairman welcomed members to the AGM and thank them for attending.

**1. Apologies for absence**

The following members sent their apologies: Ann Thompson, Dave & Jane Collorick, Ralph Atherton, Audrey Sheen, Sue Thersby, Sandra Edwards, Ken Mayer, Andy Davies, John & Jenny Irwin

**2. Minutes of the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

The minutes were accepted unanimously as a true and fair record of this meeting (proposed by Ian Mabon and seconded by Sue Munslow)

**3. Matters arising from the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

None

**4. Annual Reports from Officers (posted in the website for reference)**

**4.1 Chairman**

During his address to the meeting the Chairman:

- a) Congratulated the Footpath Committee, our 41 FP Inspectors, the Projects Team and the Database manager for the unprecedented achievement of 100% completion in the Inspection of our 1,276 paths and bringing down the number of Category C&D poor paths to an all time low of just 7.6%
- b) Celebrated the contribution of Alan Catherall over his 25 years membership of the Footpath Committee and his resolute pursuance of Access and FP improvements.
- c) Noted that the objective of halving our Bank Balance was met through expenditure on FP improvements by the Projects Team and through our sponsored capital Projects led by the Treasurer.
- d) Described the success of the Walk Leader Training Course.
- e) Reminded Members that valuable advice and guidance from the British Red Cross is available on our RA website for dealing with Medical Emergencies which occur on Walks. Four such incidents occurred in 2017.
- f) Thanked all the Committee Officers and Members for their dedicated hard work in organising all our varied activities.
- g) Announced our "Top 10 Leaders by Miles"

<b>Leader</b>	<b># walks led</b>	<b>Total miles</b>
Steve Hull	10	111.5

Colin Park	10	109
Michael Murphy	9	97.5
Kathryn Carty	11	95.2
Brian Griffiths	9	93.75
David Gylee	7	70.25
Graham Bothwell	6	69.5
Roger Fielding	6	68.25
David Hough	7	67
Janet Allan	9	65

- h) Made a plea for Members to volunteer to join the FP Committee or the Main Committee to assist with the work so that we may sustain our Group's activities and ensure that it will continue to flourish.

There were no questions from the floor

#### **4.2 Treasurer**

Key points made during the address were:

- Overall we had a deficit of £4,866 although the bank balance at year end stands at £5,182 (down from £10,048 in the previous year).
- We funded work in excess of £6,000 on various footpath maintenance projects most notably Bollington FP22 and the Poyton Bridges Project (it was noted that this project has been re - allocated to another contractor by Cheshire Council)

There were no questions from the floor.

#### **4.3 Membership Secretary**

Over this year there has been a reduction in the membership both at ECR and national level (in other groups and total numbers joining Ramblers Association). The number of active members in ECR remains stable.

There were no questions from the floor

#### **4.4 Social & Events Secretary**

There has been a great variety of events over the last 12 months and a massive “thank you” goes to everyone involved in the organization and running of events for ECR. A plea was made for volunteers to come forward to organize trips away for 2018, otherwise, these events will not be offered in the programme.

There were no questions from the floor.

#### **4.5 Footpath Committee Chairman**

The following were highlighted:

- the Committee is completing its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of work for ECR
- for the first time ever managed to inspect all 1,276 paths in our group area of 33 parishes
- Alan Catherall is retiring from the Committee after 25 years of service – his legacy was noted and his expertise will be missed (his contribution was also celebrated in the Chairman address – see 4.1 (b) above)

d) There are now two vacancies in this Committee and seeking for volunteers to step in  
There were no questions from the floor.

#### **4.6 Footpath Maintenance Projects Team**

The Coordinator provided a review of the work conducted this year (the statistics are impressive). The highlight was the refurbishing and badly rain eroded FP22 steps off Shrigley Rise in Bollington – an article will appear in the Walk Magazine probably in the next edition.

There were no questions from the floor.

#### **4.7 Publicity Officer and Lost Ways project Manager**

This year articles have been published in the Macclesfield Express on all but two weeks. – walk leaders are asked to keep up the supply of articles for next year.

There are 43 “lost ways” in our area of which 24 paths are not worth pursuing for various reasons (ie. Suitable alternatives, dead ends or built over). The remaining 19 paths require further research and worth further investigation. The next steps will be discussed with the Footpath Committee. A request was made that someone with a legal background to volunteer to join this team for the next stage in making a “claim” to reinstate the appropriate paths.

During a brief discussion the following was noted:

- A motion on the “use of lost ways” was submitted to The Ramblers Association by our Footpath Committee for consideration at the recent Regional Meeting. Unfortunately it was narrowly defeated but there may be an opportunity to resubmit at a later date.
- There is a possibility that the 2026 deadline to claim “lost ways” may be extended by the Government.
- The Area Access Forum initiative needs ECR support.

#### **5. Election of Officers and Committee**

The following stood for reelection and were elected unopposed (proposed by Michael Murphy and seconded by June Mabon): Adrian Flinn (Secretary), Colin Finlayson (Treasurer), Sue Munslow (Membership Secretary), Kathryn Carty (Committee member), Dave Barraclough (Footpath Committee representative) and Colin Park (Publicity Officer and Lost Ways Project Manager)

There was one person put forward for the Chairman position: Jane Gay proposed by Sue Munslow and seconded by Kathryn Carty. Therefore, Jane Gay was elected unanimously to replace John Edwards.

We need a volunteer to take up the vacant Social & Events Secretary position plus two volunteers to join as Committee members

#### **6. Appointment of Independent Examiner (Auditor of Accounts)**

Ken Hobbs was reappointed unanimously (proposed by Ian Mabon and seconded by David Gylee)

#### **7. Notification and publication of walk details – review and discussion of current practice**

An exhaustive debate occurred with some speakers emphasising the benefits of producing a comprehensive and varied Walks Programme at the beginning of each 6

months period showing details of the walks location, distance and category. Other members emphasised the benefits of adding the details of the walks closer to the due date. There being no Group wide consensus the Committee would continue to produce guidance which sought to produce the best Programme from these two differing practices.

## **8. Any Other Business**

### **8.1 Location of Walks**

There was a short debate between those who thought the Group was offering too many walks from a few favourite local starting points and we were in danger of becoming the "Bollington and Lyme Park" Ramblers. Others reacted strongly against such a view stating that they valued local walks which reduced travel times and allowed friends to meet for some pleasant exercise before returning to do other things for the rest of the day.

### **8.2 Walks occurring on Social Activities: 3rd Party Liability Insurance for Leaders.**

Ian Mabon quoted the requirements from the RA Insurance Guide 2016-17 (page 5) :

*"To be considered an official Ramblers walk, and covered by the liability insurance, all walks, including coach rambles must:*

- 1. Be brought to the attention of the Programme Coordinator, who ideally has confidence in the Walk Leader's ability to lead the walk.*
- 2. Be publicised as a Ramblers activity, in advance, in at least one of the following ways:*
  - On the Group Walks and Event Manager*
  - In a printed programme*
  - On the group/area website*
- 3. Have a nominated Leader, and ideally a Backmarker who (together, or separately) have ideally recce'd the walk. Both the Walk Leader and Backmarker must be members.*
- 4. Walks involving an overnight stay must also:*
  - Have an overall primary organiser who ideally has confidence in the ability of Walk Leaders to lead each walk and who will vary the programme of walks if circumstances demand."*

He asked the Committee to ensure that these requirements were met. The Committee replied that all walks on Weekends Away appeared in the printed Programme for that weekend. The publication of Coach Rambles would be considered further.

**8.3** Roger Norton paid a tribute to Joy Abraham, a long standing member of ECR, who had sadly recently passed away.

**8.4** Our retiring Chairman was given a standing ovation in acknowledgement of the outstanding work and contribution made over the last 3 years to ECR.

The meeting closed at 4 pm

Adrian Flinn – ECR Committee Secretary  
20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Dates of Meetings to be held in 2018 (venues to be confirmed in late summer):

- ECR AGM – date to be confirmed later
- The Area AGM will be held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018