



West Berks Ramblers Annual General Meeting

Draft Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 6th November 2024 at 7.30pm

Location – Falklands Cricket Club

Present: Fifty-one members of West Berkshire Ramblers

Apologies: Debbie Bradshaw Caroline Clugston, Steve Collins, Sue Futchter, John Hodgskin, Jayne Kirk, Jane Pike, Neal Pike, Anne Starr, Ian Tempest Fiona Walker, Frances Rayson

Before the start of AGM proceedings Eugene asked those present to complete a short questionnaire regarding participation in West Berkshire Ramblers activities. He then gave a brief presentation on the recent West Berkshire Ramblers trip to Morocco.

Approval of the 2023 AGM Minutes

A draft copy of the 2023 AGM Minutes has been available to read on the West Berkshire Ramblers website since November 2023.

Approval of Minutes

Proposed – Neil Lawrence

Seconded – Robin Clugston

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were accepted as correct.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman's report has been available for members to read on the West Berkshire Ramblers website and on the night a hard copy was posted on the notice board. Eugene read his report in full to the members present.

Treasurer's Report

The accounts have been available for members to scrutinise on the West Berkshire Ramblers website prior to the AGM. On the night they were posted on the Ramblers notice board and Eugene gave a short summary of the end of year accounts.

Approval of the Accounts

Proposed – Bruce Blaine

Seconded – Dawn Tait

The accounts for 2023/2024 were accepted as correct.

Appointment of an Independent Examiner for Group Accounts

Thanks were given to Jane Pike for being the Independent Examiner of the accounts.

Jane has once again kindly volunteered again for this role next year.

Proposed – Eugene Futchter

Seconded – Robin Clugston

Officer's Reports

Reports from the Secretary, Walks Coordinator, Membership Secretary, Footpath, Secretary, Publicity Officer, Walking Environment, and Working Party and Events Coordinator have all been available to be read on the West Berkshire Ramblers website prior to the AGM. On the night copies were posted on the Ramblers notice board.

There were no questions from the members with regard to any of the reports.

Election of Committee Members and Officers

After several years of sterling service to the group, Eugene has decided to step down as Chairman.

Chairman: Nomination - Andrew Jackson Proposed – Eugene Fatcher
Seconded - Shona Kelly

The membership elected Andrew Jackson as Chairman

Jayne Kirk, has also decided to step down as Treasurer this year. Thanks was given for Jayne for her contribution to this role.

Treasurer: Nomination – Peter Bennet Proposed – Gill Lawrence
Seconded - Eugene Futchner

The membership elected Peter Bennett and Treasurer.

Gill Lawrence is willing to continue as secretary for another year.

Group Secretary: Nomination – Gill Lawrence
Proposed – Eugene Futchner
Seconded – Neil Lawrence

The membership re-elected Gill Lawrence as secretary.

The remainder of the committee were elected on block.

Walking Environment Officer: Graham Smith

Footpath Secretary: Neal Pike

Events Coordinator: Shona Kelly

Webmaster: Steve Collins

Membership Secretary: Robin Clugston

Assistant Membership Secretary: John Gardner

Walks Coordinator: Siân Williams

Assistant Walks Coordinator: Debbie Bradshaw

Publicity Officer: Jonathon Sayers

Proposed – Dawn Tait

Seconded – Bruce Blaine

All positions were approved by the membership.

Eugene gave thanks to Richard Trimmer, who was stepping down from the role of Publicity Officer, Jayne Kirk, our departing Treasurer and Sue Trimmer, the former Walks Coordinator.

Any Other Business

A member asked for a Ramblers HQ response for the reasoning behind advanced booking to go on Ramblers walks.

Eugene (the outgoing Chairman) gave a detailed reply which noted that HQ guidance for walkers asks for walk leaders to have a register of who is walking. The booking system fulfils this obligation and he then explained some of the reasoning behind this new development.

He noted that the Ramblers' Booking System Guide' details some of the options available to manage the numbers on group walks and this can be found in the Ramblers Document Library under 'Walking Activities' > 'Leading and Organising walks'.

:<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/support-us/volunteer-resources>

A question was then asked as to why there was a cut off time of 6 o'clock the day before a walk for booking rather than the morning of the walk. The timing is to give the walk leader notice of who is attending, but it would also be unfair to expect the walk coordinators to be working on Rambler matters first thing in the morning of every walk. It was suggested people should book and then cancel if they didn't want to participate.

Presentations

There followed three presentations.

Firstly, thanks was given to Fiona Walker who has led the Rights of Way working party for over twenty years. She organised the fortnightly clearing of West Berkshire footpaths along with replacing missing or damaged signage. Fiona, was unfortunately absent so will receive an engraved glass bowl at the Volunteers meal later in November.

Secondly, thanks was given to Richard Trimmer who has been our publicity officer for seven years. He created and managed the growing West Berkshire Ramblers Facebook page, has kept our website up to date and wrote regularly for the Southeast Walker newspaper. He was present with a group of history books.

Thanks, and gratitude was also given to Jayne Kirk our out going Treasurer. She was unable to attend the AGM, but was sent a bouquet of flowers.

Finally, a presentation of a glass tankard to Eugene Fitcher took place. He is stepping down as our Chairman and has worked tirelessly for the Ramblers cause, both as walk leader, undertaking footpath clearances with the power tool group and

installing new gates in place of stiles. He kept the group as active as possible during Covid and we will continue to benefit from his wisdom as a committee member.

Meeting Ended – 8.15pm