



MINUTES of the Godalming and Haslemere Group Annual General Meeting held at St. Hilary's School, Godalming on 19th November 2011, 7.30 pm

Present: Committee Members – Jim Chipchase (Chair), Lucy Baier (Secretary), Andrew Piercey (Treasurer), Judith Brignell, Rosemary Gray, Nicky Salway, Mike Pope, Damian Wheeler; Denis Holmes and David Hutton (ex officio Footpath Secretaries)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Peter Horlock (Committee Member), Heather Dillon, Muriel Clark, Don Clark, Margaret Heath.

2. MINUTES OF THE 2010 AGM

Copies of the Minutes of the 2010 AGM had been available on the Group website and copies were also provided for the members present. The Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate account.

(Proposer: David Quick, Seconder: Richard Evans).

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Jim welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

'I am pleased to report that we have had yet another successful year thanks to the work of a large and dedicated group of volunteers and walk leaders.

Firstly the walks programme where we had a very full programme including lots of our old favourite specials like the Festival of winter walks organised by Damian. In fact we had a little too much emphasis on the "winter " last year and we had to cancel several walks whilst struggling through and enduring a few others. I would just like to thank various leaders for their careful reviewing of weather forecasts etc. and the cancelling of walks where they felt there were likely to be problems. We have added a short paragraph at the beginning of the walks programme to deal with cancellations.

Other examples of specials were a mince pie walk by Betty and Derek, supper walk by Nicky and Rosemary, curry walk by Helen, a moonlight saunter by Wendy and Jack, Isle of Wight walk by Muriel and Don, fish and chip supper by Damian, Virginia Woolf walk by Betty and Derek, Hindhead Tunnel by Heather, London Olympic sites by Barry and many more. All these ideas including the new twists really do help to make it a fantastic programme so thanks to everyone for leading walks and coming up with new ideas, please keep them coming.

Next I want to mention the Greensand Way where thanks to Denis Holmes and others, the whole of the Surrey section has now been re-waymarked and a new website launched. All we need to do now is walk it! So if any of you would like to form a small group to organise a series of walks along its length please talk to a member of the committee.

Social events have been a great success, starting with last year's New Year lunch, followed by the skittles evening, slide evening and barn dance. Our social committee often work behind the scenes but have made a great contribution to the success of our group and after many years' service Jill Billett and Damian Wheeler retired from the committee, and Wendy Hoare and Muriel Clark will also leave at the end of the year so let's just put our hands together to thank them for all the work they have done.

We have had another set of highly successful coach walks where, even with a larger coach, we still had a waiting list. Thanks once again to Heather and Judith and the walk leaders and back markers for their hard work.

There have also been 2 separate holidays organised for the group by Margaret and Judith and Alan which were thoroughly enjoyed by all and thanks for organising them. On the holiday front you should all be aware that HF holidays is now the preferred and linked partner for Ramblers giving in some cases individual discounts but also giving donations to Ramblers.

Our finances are in great shape thanks in large part to Jean (Harker), for her fantastic determination in getting our books into the National Trust outlets, and her trusty band of booksellers. Also Julian has been working away and created the ability for people to buy individual walks off our website. Thank you - we are trying to spend the money raised wisely.

Now you may have noticed our rather flashy new banners for promoting Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers - thanks to Mike Pope for organising these for us. They were successfully used on our stall at the Godalming Spring Fair where we were able to sell some books, some old maps and secondhand hiking gear, which had been generously donated by various members. This also gave us a great opportunity to talk to the general public about our ramblers group and the overall aims and actions of ramblers as a whole. Thanks to Denis for getting our photo into South East Ramblers which, together with Heather's starring role in the tunnel article and the Greensand way, have meant we have had a good batch of publicity. We intend to use these banners and the new gazebo we recently purchased at next year's Haslemere and Godalming local fairs and any other charity events to try to raise our profile locally.

Things have also been changing on the footpath network and our footpath secretaries (Denis and David) together with Brian Gray and John Colligan are now undertaking BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicator) checks on the network on behalf of Surrey County Council. Mike and Richard continue to monitor and help with West Sussex footpaths.

That brings me on to HQ events over the year. Well, the overriding concern with HQ continues to be the decline in membership that is being felt across all areas with only 1 exception. Obviously the whole economic climate isn't helping this situation but they have held a detailed survey of all those leaving us after one year and of these 53% said membership was as expected, 13% said it was a little better, 14% much better and 20%

worse than expected. Otherwise they commented on lack of suitable walks, no response to requests, too many breaks, not welcomed. There have been lots of suggestions on what we should do, but certainly for our group we believe we should just continue to concentrate on the fundamentals of creating the best walks programme we can, encourage everyone to maintain an open and friendly approach to everyone, especially new members or members who only walk occasionally, and maintain a good social programme. We are trialling a few short walks of easy pace on Fridays to see if there is any demand. We also maintain our view that we should never refuse any volunteer for leading a walk.

I would also like to give a special thank you to Cynthia for continuing to provide an excellent service managing membership details and emergency notices, to Sheila for editing our newsletters and Julian for keeping our website up and running. So thanks one and all, you're doing a great job and as a result we are all having a great time.

Sadly I also have to report the death of Phillip Allen (known as Roger Allen) who we think was secretary of the group in the 80's

Finally 3 committee members are retiring this year and I would like to add my thanks to Lucy for all her hard work in sorting out committee meetings, minutes and lots of other stuff, Judith for her work on Holidays and coach walks and Peter for all his work.

So thanks to everyone and keep up the good work.

5A. SECRETARY'S REPORT (Lucy Baier)

On secretarial matters - we have held four meetings during 2010-11 with almost full attendance at each meeting. The officers produce reports for each meeting as they do for this meeting and we discuss a wide range of issues as they arise.

I'll just remind you that the minutes from this meeting will be placed on our website in due course but if you don't have access to the internet, and you'd like a copy, just contact the secretary.

Membership - Special thanks to Cynthia for managing and supplying the figures, particularly during this past year when, due to staff cuts at Ramblers head office, actioning and keeping track of membership has been complicated to say the least.

End September 2011 (all 2010 numbers in brackets)

Total membership 426 (450)

comprising

Life members 8 (8)

Members in joint membership 224 (240)

Individual members 194 (202)

There has been an overall decrease in membership of 24 during the past year. There are a variety of reasons for this as people's circumstances change, but more people this year have discontinued membership because they are no longer able to participate actively and need to make savings on their outgoings.

During the last financial year (1st Oct 2010-30 Sept 2011) Godalming & Haslemere Group has welcomed 43 new members, including two who transferred when their own Group was disbanded.

Email lists. These are growing steadily and we now have 210 (171) email addresses for those who receive programmes and newsletters electronically. We also have another 29 (40) email addresses for those who are happy to receive notices electronically but wish to continue receiving programmes and newsletters by post). The majority of new members have email and are happy to receive all their mailings electronically. This trend indicates that the email lists will continue to grow and the numbers receiving postal mailings will gradually decline. We continue to send out mailings to approximately 120 addresses.

If you would like to be included on either type of email list, please speak to a member of the committee or directly to Cynthia. Remember, the more people who receive mailings electronically, the more money we have available for promoting and furthering the interests of the ramblers and maintaining the public rights of way.

Lastly, the Group's records have now been archived at the Surrey History Centre under Accession reference 8788. The document list is available in the SHC supervised searchroom and on the website (as well as from our Group Secretary).

5B. SOCIAL EVENTS (Muriel Clark)

We have enjoyed several social events during the last year.

Following walks around Haslemere and Grayswood, the New Year Lunch was held last January, at the Georgian House Hotel in Haslemere for the third year. 92 members sat down to an excellent meal.

In March we were taken on a trip around the world with 9 people's photographs. We shared a splendid supper during the evening.

The Barn Dance was held a few weeks ago in October. As usual this was a lively event as members attempted to follow instructions to perform simple dances. It was all great fun and it was good to see so many newer members there.

So it is time to remind you to send me your New Year Lunch menus and money - by 30th November please. The lunch is on 8th January and is being held at the Clockhouse in Milford.

17th March is the date for the next photo evening so I hope you are organising your best pictures to show.

During the year both Jill Billett and Damian Wheeler decided to step down from the committee. Wendy Hoare has also decided that it is time for a change and will finish her time after the AGM. I thank them all for their hard work over the years. I have also decided to give up after the New Year Lunch. We all feel it is good for other people to have the opportunity to do these jobs and to come along with fresh ideas and different ways of doing things. I'm pleased to say that Lucy Baier, Margaret Baxter and Jean Harker have all agreed to join Nicky Salway and Alison Briscoe on the Social Committee.

5C. HOLIDAYS (Judith Brignell)

Two very successful holidays were held during the 2010 – 2011 period, at HF Brecon Beacons in May (Margaret Baxter) and another HF holiday in Tuscany in September (Alan and Judith Brignell). We go to HF Dolgellau in May 2012 (Margaret Baxter) and the Bodrum Peninsula in Turkey in September (Don and Muriel Clark). There are still

some twin rooms available for the Dolgellau holiday – contact Margaret Baxter if interested.

Three days of coach walks took place in August 2011, visiting the following places: Lacock, Wiltshire; Rye, E. Sussex; Corfe Castle, Dorset. All the walks were very well attended.

Further coach walks are planned for April (Chilterns and Dorset) and August 2012 (Greensand Way, Kent; West Wycombe NT; Cotswolds). The Group was reminded that it was essential to book early for coach walks.

Thanks and appreciation was expressed to all holiday/coach walk leaders and organisers.

5D. WALKS PROGRAMME STATISTICS (Damian Wheeler)

We have once again had a record number of people out on G & H walks during the year. The grand total was 3757 compared with 3535 last year. Three programmes were produced and consisted of 109 (103) all day, 89 (76) half day and 14 (18) figure of eight walks. There was an average of 17.72 (17.88) people on the 212 (197) walks organised during this period. Each week there was an average of 72 (68) people walking with the group.

The figures in brackets in the text represent those for the year 2009/10.

Day	Type of Walk	Total Walkers 2010/11	Total Walkers 2009/10	No. of Walks 2010/11	No. of Walks 2009/10	Ave No. Walkers 2010/11	Ave No Walkers 2009/10
Sunday	All	788	792	50	51	15.76	15.53
Sunday	All day	226	189	22	21	10.27	9.00
Sunday	Half day	471	458	22	23	21.41	19.91
Sunday	Fig of 8	91	145	6	7	15.17	20.71
Weds	All	1963	1949	98	96	20.03	20.30
Weds	All day	1704	1519	87	78	19.59	19.47
Weds	Half day	58	149	3	7	19.33	21.29
Weds	Fig of 8	201	281	8	11	25.13	25.55
Friday	Half day	401	373	18	21	22.28	17.76
Monday	Half day	10	29	1	1	10.00	29.00
Tuesday	Half day	None	8	None	1	None	8.00
Thurs	Half day	425	242	36	18	11.81	13.44
Saturday	All day/ half day	170	129	9	9	18.88	14.33

The all-day figures include about 75 people who walked half of an all-day walk (i.e. walked either the morning or afternoon section).

There was an increase this year in the Friday evening walk attendance. An average of over 22 walkers came out each week with 108 different people coming at least once. The Sunday and Wednesday total numbers are remarkably similar to the previous year.

Our thanks are due to the programme compilers, those who led walks, back-markers middle-markers and all those who have walked.

It was explained that the Tuesday half day walk had been cancelled due to bad weather. Short and leisurely Friday half-day walks are being tried out to gauge popularity.

5E. WEBSITE (Julian Yorke)

These are the official usage statistics over the past year:

Unique visitors – 5369 (up from 5056)

Actual visits – 7551 (down from 8037)

Pages browsed – 45476 (down from 55631)

These are the main issues to date:

- New programme template continues to be used for which I am grateful as saves having to rekey details for head office walkfinder
- Message Board attracting less spam now but may replace with new blog provided by web host
- Publication Sales:
 - I haven't made any progress on investigating if selling them from RA's own online bookshop is feasible but will discuss this with the committee in due course
 - Download sales – have implemented this now for republished 25 Favourites but yet to make any sales (discount price of 3 for £1.20, normally selling at 50p each which shouldn't detract from actual book sales as much more economical to purchase that for all walks)
- Photos – I have put a few on myself and received a number re the Hindhead tunnel opening event but would be grateful for any more from future walks.

5F. FOOTPATH WORKING GROUP (Jim Chipchase)

Over the year 01 Oct 2010 to 30 Sept 2011 we had a total of 86.5 man /woman days of work. We worked 1 day each month except January.

Installation of 8 metre oak bridge / boardwalk with handrail at Frensham little pond

Clearance and re-alignment of approx 100 metres of FP238a at Chiddingfold

Installation of 2 kissing gates at FP126 Rake Lane, Milford

Installation of a field gate at FP242 Grayswood

Clearance of FP 275A at Bramley (this was subject to legal debate between SCC and the adjacent landowner and was carried out with the adjacent land owner present and taking pictures whilst complaining!)

12 way mark posts and 1 finger post on the Greensand Way near Hurtwood Control car park no 5

10 way markposts installed or re-positioned SW Surrey Golf Course FP 132

Installation of 4 kissing gates and a set of 15 steps at FP87 Witley near Brook

14 Metre of Boardwalk at the Moat, Elstead

1 Kissing gate and 2 steps at FP200 Pook Hill, Chiddingfold

Your stoical volunteers worked in frost, torrential rain, hot sunshine and generally damp conditions but I am pleased to say we avoided having any cases of trench foot or sunstroke although there were some mild cases of alcohol deprivation.

Thanks to David Hutton who has shared the running of the work party with me and thanks to all the work party for their efforts over the year.
And finally, the Award for 'Secret Labelling' goes to Denis Holmes and Brian Gray!

6. TREASURERS REPORT FOR FY 2010/2011 (Andrew Piercey)

Cash Position at 30 Sept. 2011: +5896.55p (See "Outstanding Commitments" below)

(Cash position at start of year was +£3622.42p)

Major Activities during the Year

"Main" (i.e. Core Business)	Income	Expenditure	Surplus/(Deficit)
Ramblers Central Office Funding	Nil		
Walks Programme Print and Post		£732.87	
Purchase gazebo/ banners for sales use at Fairs		£373.34	
Book Sales (644 books)	£2292.79		
"Self-Funded" (i.e. Coach Walks and Socials)			
Coach Walks Overall (3 trips, 154 walkers)	£2618.00	£2068.88	£549.12
A3 Tunnel Walk (46 walkers)	£276.00	£276.00	
Skittles Evening (45 skittlers)	£405.00	£363.29	£41.71
2010 AGM (75 attendees)	£216.09	£122.88	£93.21
2011 New Year Lunch (94 diners)	£1786.00	£1777.90	£8.10
Slide Evening (50 attendees)	£75.50	£32.00	£43.50

Outstanding "Commitments"

We have committed to purchasing 2 more kissing gates for local footpaths at a cost of £500. We have also committed to funding the promotional leaflet, published by Surrey CC, for the re-dedication of the Greensand Way, at a cost of £300. £800 of our year-end cash position represents payments made by attendees of the October Barn Dance.

Programme Printing and Posting

Postage rates are increasing and we continue to try to reduce these costs with more e-mailing.

Book Sales

Sales this year were 644 books, including a bulk sale of 256 books to Mayfield Books who distribute to National Trust shops and Waterstones. This compares to 376 last year and 410 the previous year. We still have an inventory of about 1600 books so are continuing with every effort to sell these before they drift out of date.

Coach Walks and Social Events

The Coach Walks Organisers and Social Committee have worked very hard to make these great successes. Please help by booking early, as these activities often have high “up-front” costs. The Coach Walks were very popular and fully attended, hence a significant financial surplus. This surplus has been retained to offset costs for the 2012 Coach Walks.

Budget 2011/12

Due to the healthy cash position and assumed reasonable ongoing book sales, the Committee has requested zero funding from Central Office for next year. We need about £1500 to fund our core activities. Provision is made for expenditure on 2 more kissing gates and the Committee is considering a donation of £1,000 to Ramblers for a specific legal fund e.g establishment of the Coastal Path. Good book sales are crucial. We plan to attend at least 2 Fairs in 2012 to achieve sales of around 400 books plus miscellaneous items. Our projected cash position at September 2012 is around +£3,500. However, if we were to have no book sales then we would end with about +£2,000 and we would have to consider re-commencement of funding from Central Office.

The Accounts were accepted as accurate. Proposer Denis Holmes, Seconder Mike Pope.

7. FOOTPATH SECRETARY’S REPORT (Denis Holmes and David Hutton)

1. The project to improve Greensand Way long distance route is a joint operation with Surrey CC. There is a new Website by SCC with route maps and instructions. Full surveys have taken place and replacement waymarks with new logo of Leith Hill Tower are in situ. A new leaflet funded by the G&H Group informs about the web site and provides overall guidance how to walk the route. Surrey Area FP Secretaries and volunteers were the workforce. The re-launch celebration took place on 13th October at Leith Hill. Lots of thanks to everyone involved and excellent liaison opportunities with SCC RoW Countryside Officers.

2. Ramblers in Surrey have taken over the audit system to evaluate the standard of Rights of Way from Surrey CC. – Best Value Performance Indicator178. Training has been given to ensure consistency. The audit is carried out in May and November each year on a random selection of paths. Our volunteers trained are Denis Holmes, David Hutton, Brian Gray, John Colligan. The results are published for the whole county and also nationally showing the percentage of paths easily used.

A new system has been started by SCC, authorising volunteers to carry out minor maintenance work on Rights of Way. Training will be given and tools supplied. Full insurance cover given by SCC. We have three volunteers so far - if anyone else wishes to apply please let us know

3. Our Working Party is doing a grand job carrying out really useful projects – Brian Gray and I have continued to fix plaques on all the work sites to advertise what the Rambler do to maintain the path network.

4. An application has been made to add a new path to the ROW Definitive Map at the rear of Winkworth Arboretum. This back entrance was closed about the year 2000. I

have supported this claim by a Mr Singer (on behalf of the Ramblers) who has obtained 8 user evidence forms so far. If any member wishes to complete a form please get in touch – to my knowledge many walkers have used this access path for many years and it was used on group walks regularly.

5. Please keep up the reporting of path problems to David Hutton and myself – use any method, email or web site is the best.

6. **Publicity:** We have publicised our walks in Surrey CC Countryside Walks and Events Programme (22,000 copies) with also a Ramblers advert funded by Area. I have placed 2 press releases in local papers for our walks. The next big event is The Festival of Winter Walks – a press release will be sent issued approx 2 weeks before Xmas.

Interview with Radio Surrey on the Greensand Way project at 7.25 am – what devotion to the cause! 10,000 copies of the GW leaflet printed (see copies available at AGM) – a superb advert for the Ramblers.

8. COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER'S REPORT

As this role no longer exists, there was no report.

9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Lucy Baier, Peter Horlock and Judith Brignell have all completed their 3-year terms.

Julia Evans (as secretary), Julian Yorke and Maureen Holland all expressed their willingness to stand for the Committee. Other nominations were called for but none received.

There being no further nominations, the existing committee of Jim Chipchase, Andrew Piercey, Rosemary Gray, Nicky Salway and Mike Pope will all continue in post.

New Members: Julia Evans	Proposed by Cynthia Chard, Seconded by Lionel Larcombe	Elected Unopposed
Maureen Holland	Proposed by Eileen Fleming, Seconded by Ray Pont	Elected Unopposed
Julian Yorke	Proposed by Rosemary Bryant, Seconded by Kate Colley	Elected Unopposed
Current Committee Members	Proposed by Paul Cope, Seconded by Cynthia Chard	Elected Unopposed

Kate Colley had expressed willingness to continue as Financial Examiner.

Damian Wheeler and Denis Holmes had expressed willingness to continue as Surrey Area Council Representatives.

All retiring and new Committee members and those fulfilling other official functions were thanked for their hard work. The members present showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

10. IMPROVEMENTS/CHANGES/ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The issue of contributing to other charities with broadly similar aims to the Ramblers was discussed with particular emphasis on Friends of Hurtwood. As this is an area used frequently by our group it was thought that the Committee would be happy to make a contribution (to be discussed).

Ideas for more book sale outlets were called for and Mike Pope proposed thanks to Jean Harker for her excellent work on this project.

Damian Wheeler will host another social evening on 2nd December at the King's Arms Hotel, Godalming.

Richard Evans appealed for assistance with a footpath inspection at Plaistow which will take approximately 1 week.

Betty Coxhill reminded the Group of the 14th December walk with the opportunity to contribute to the Parkinson's UK charity. There will also be a short walk organised.

Betty Coxhill and Mike Pope were both thanked for their work on the bar and buffet at the AGM.

Mike Pope reminded the Group that there would be a bar with reasonable prices run by the Group (Jim Chipchase as Licencee) at the New Year Lunch.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm and was followed by a buffet supper. Approximately 82 members attended the meeting.

Lucy Baier
Hon. Secretary