RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION CIRENCESTER GROUP
40TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
to be held at THE WATERLOO MEETING ROOM CIRENCESTER
at 7.30PM on 26th NOVEMBER 2014

AGENDA

1. Chairman's Introduction
2. Apologies
3. Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Matters Arising From Reports
   Treasurer/ Footpath Secretary/ Programme Secretaries/ Liaison Officer/ Website/ Membership Secretary
5. Election of Officers

OFFICE	**NOMINATION**
Chairman	JOHN BOOKWOOD
Vice Chairman	PHIL GEARING
Secretary	PAT BECKLEY
Treasurer	ALAN COOK
Membership Secretary	MIKE BAILEY
Publicity Officer -	VACANT
Programme Secretaries	W VEITCH/P BOOKWOOD/R BAILEY
Committee Member	STUART DYER
Footpath Sec/Access Officer	RICHARD HOLMES
Cirencester Liaison Officer	BILL IRVING
Area Representative No 1	PHIL GEARING
Area Representative No 2	VACANT
Footpath Committee –	B Irving/G Stephenson/B White
	C Dustin/J Bookwood J Pinnington
Webmaster	ALAN COOK (ACTING)

6. PRESENTATION REVIEW OF 40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR – S DYER

7. AOB
   New Chairperson's Address
   Walking for Health

Treasurer's Report

The Annual Accounts for the year upto September 30th are completed and sent to the Area Treasurer, for inclusion in the Area and National Accounts.

The Income and Expenditure Amounts, with the previous year in the last column are:

INCOME	**2013/14**	**2012/13**
Area Grant	261.00	252.00
Income from Walks Leaflets, sold at Tourist Information	5.60	8.00
Gross Interest, Unity Bank Account	.92	0.94
Fund Raising (Cotswold Outdoor)	125.00	205.00
Donations	40.00	20.00
TOTAL	**432.52**	**485.94**
EXPENDITURE		
Walks Programmes In 2012/13 we were using a stockpile of postage stamps, purchased before a price increase	115.47	38.68
Walk Related	0.00	20.00
Newsletters/Publicity	135.19	163.80
Publication Costs	0.00	1.00
Campaigns/casework (Footpath Committee)	136.88	171.58
Practical Work	34.97	0.00
Meetings, including AGM	15.48	9.73
TOTAL	**437.99**	**404.79**
Overall Surplus/Deficit	-5.47	81.15

The Assets of the Group at year end, excluding Deposits for Social Events are £253.86. (£259.33 at the start of the year)

The assets, including Social Events are £1,353.86 and the difference will be paid to the Hotels when the final balances are due

A main part of the treasurer's job is now collecting the payments for our events and paying the providers. This year's events were 2013 Vaults Xmas Meal, 2014 Torquay Weekend, 2015 Gower Weekend (Deposit) and 2015 Torquay Mid Week Break(Deposit). Overall, £5,783.20 was collected and £4,888.50 paid out. **Overall these events must be self-funded and balance to zero**, and this will be achieved when the Gower and Torquay Bookings are completed.

After considering the budget for 2014/15, which was prepared with the Committee, it was found that the "standard formula" grant of £269 would be insufficient for the next year. Thus we applied for £440, which has been approved

Our thanks to Paul Horrell for once again completing the audit of our Annual Accounts. Paul has kindly agreed to audit our 2014/15 accounts. The audited Accounts will be at the AGM, for viewing.

Alan Cook, Honorary Treasurer

Footpath Secretary's Report

Thanks to the footpath committee for all their help and support. The members currently are Coralie Dustin, Bill Irving, John Bookwood, John Pennington, Bill White, Gary Stephenson and Richard Holmes. Jill Byrne has stood down as Area Secretary and her duties are currently shared by the FP Secretaries.

Over the past year the Committee has held four meetings and we have looked at 36 different footpath issues across our area. Some of these are very straightforward, paths blocked by electric fences or vegetation; others are more complex and longstanding. There have only been three formal consultations with GCC; Bibury, Ampney St Mary and Rendcomb. Members have also been out on numerous site visits and followed up queries from the general public. One such phone call led to six finger posts being repaired.

Significant Highlights

Bowmoor Lake - The issue with the path that has been temporarily closed for more than 7 years still continues. Taking advice from the Ramblers legal team we challenged the lack of progress with the County Council and members of the FP Committee attended a 'formal' meeting with representatives from GCC legal section. It looked as though we were making some progress but recently another 12 month temporary stoppage has been imposed.

Cotswold Canal Trust approached the FP Committee with queries about access to the Eastern part of the canal. We have again taken advice from Ramblers Legal Team and we are currently exploring ways forward.

Cirencester Community Active Map has been produced and circulated – Cirencester Ramblers were included on the map.

Amey PLC – apart from two members of staff the rest of the GCC Public Rights of Way team have been contracted out to Amey. The current arrangements are not significantly different in the Cirencester area, there are still financial constraints on footpath work and the support for volunteers has still not materialised.

Upper Thames Cross County Partnership – the FP Committee has started an exercise to map and survey all the rights of way in the area that are at risk from gravel extraction. The maps are currently being drawn up and then the survey can commence.

Footpath Volunteers - the survey of fifteen parishes' has now been completed and this has identified a range of problems. Many of these issues have been resolved by the Path Maintenance Volunteers. We have also completed a more detailed survey of Cirencester paths with a view to making the paths easier to use.

Anniversary Gate – the negotiating for the gate and project managing the process was successfully completed with the formal opening of the new gate in August.

The FP Committee are engaged in the proposed Chesterton development in Cirencester and have identified potential new routes and have followed this up with maps.

The FP Committee is currently engaged with the Cotswold Water Park to explore the possibility of applying for a fund to improve a lakeside path. We are also in contact with a County Councillor and are looking at ways of developing the 'Active Together' scheme.

Apart from the routine contact with Public Rights of Way Team, we have held meetings with North East Wilts Ramblers, Amey and Cirencester Town Council. The Committee also has links with the Local Access Forum and the Cotswold Trails and Access Partnership.

Path Maintenance Volunteers have now been delivering practical work for more than twelve months. There are 14 volunteers and with an average working party of about 6. We have had working parties across our area including Eastleach, Siddington and Barnsley and throughout the year have delivered 200 hours of practical support.

Richard Holmes, Footpath Secretary

Programme Secretaries' Reports

There were 60 walks between November 2013 and October 2014, with an average of 20 people on each walk.

November 2013 to February 2014

On the winter programme, November 2013 to the end of February 2014, there were seventeen scheduled walks. In spite of the very wet winter, all the walks took place. I can only think that our ingenious walk leaders devised ways of avoiding pools of water and the ever present mud. Thank you to them all.

The walks were spread around the county and beyond and can be summarised as follows:

North 2 (Northleach, Cobberley)

South 2 (Castle Eaton, Kingsdown)

East 3 (Barnsley, Bibury, Uffington)

West 8 (Sapperton, Minchinhampton, Sherston, Miserden, Kemble, Oakridge, Beverston, Tetbury)

Cirencester 2

The longest was 10 miles, going from Miserden and the two shortest being 5 miles. One from Cirencester and one from Minchinhampton. There were 2 Anniversary walks (Kemble & Bibury)

The total mileage for this programme was 115 miles with an average walking distance of 7 miles.

Pat Bookwood, Programme Secretary (November to February)

March 2014 to June 2014

Twenty three walks were scheduled for this programme and all went ahead as planned and on some occasions there were short and long versions of the walks.

The locations of the Sunday walks were as follows: Daneway (Sylvia Hemmings leading her first walk for the group), Birdlip, Chedworth (Paul Maidens leading his first walk for the group), Cutsdean, Down Ampney, Miserden, Bradford-on-Avon, Minster Lovell, Wantage, Cold Aston, Winchcombe, Snowshill, Kilkenny, Wye Valley, Avebury (Alison leading her first walk for the group) and Wootton Rivers. As one of her many 50th Birthday celebrations Sue Bruton organised a trip to Lynton & Lynmouth where those attending enjoyed walks in that area. The programme ended with the annual Strawberry Tea, held at Chedworth Village Hall and was preceded by a short walk which 33 members and guests took part in with over 70 members and guests attending the tea.

We marked "Get Walking Week" at the beginning of May with a figure of eight walk on the Sunday at Eastleach and our first evening walk of the summer from Cricklade. During the programme we had further evening walks in Rendcombe, Bishopstone and Bibury and as always the evening walks proved popular. On the March to June programme we had a total of six 40th Anniversary walks, two of them being evening walks.

In addition to the above, March saw 34 of the group enjoy a Weekend Away staying at the Carlton Hotel in Torquay. There were short and long walk options on both days over the weekend, so very special thanks go to Stuart Dyer for planning, walking over and leading these walks. Many may not know that when he went to Torquay early in 2014 to do the walkovers, he experienced some of the worst gales of the winter and had to dodge flying paving slabs on the route!

Finally thanks go to the walk leaders and back markers because we could not put our programmes together without them and to those who helped in various capacities with the other events that took place.

Rosemary Bailey, Programme Secretary (March to June)

July 2014 to October 2014

22 walks were provided for these months, of which 6 celebrated our 40th Anniversary, being repeats in the area of walks which took place in 1974; and the Dedication of the Anniversary Kissing Gate at Kingshill. (Details of both being in Stuart's Report.) In mid-August we also took part in the Thames Festival Event – "Source to Sea River Relay".

There were 3 evening walks in Crudwell, Fairford and Siddington – the latter concluding with a guided tour of the Force Brewery with Head Brewer, Charles Malet. Photographic record of the group showing keen interest!!

A strenuous 10 miles in the Malvern Hills was the first Sunday walk in this programme, split into two sections of 5 miles each and concluding with a visit to the grave of Sir Edward Elgar.

Beautiful Adlestrop and the surrounding villages of Charleton, Cornwall and Daylesford attracted 22 walkers; and in glorious weather the next walk took place around the lakes at South Cerney.

'Walking with Rosie' and memories of Laurie Lee in this the 100th anniversary year of his birth provided a strenuous 7 mile walk from Painswick in the lovely Slad Valley. Next, from Chedworth we took the route for a brief visit to RFC Rendcomb Airfield, where we remembered its use in WW1 100 years ago, in the weekend commemorating the outbreak of that War.

Unfortunately the wonderful English summer weather could not last and only a few hardy souls joined the Daglingworth and Bagendon walk – it is to be hoped Ian and Sylvia will lead us again on a sunnier day.

The two "Source to Sea River Relay" walks, led by Stuart and accompanied by Jon Cooke of Totally Thames, started from the river's source to Cricklade – 11.5 miles on Sunday 17th August, and from Cricklade to Lechlade the next day - 10 miles. Members, in turn, carrying the bottle of river water, which was then transported by various other means along the full length of the Thames and finally out to sea.

A large group walked in the Brimsfield, Syde & Caudle Green area, but in early September perhaps holidays intervened as only a very small number took the 10 mile circular route Fairford to Lechlade.

Most of the walks on the programme in September and October had the option of a shorter version and this was the case for our visit to Aldbourne where the main group walked the longer path up to the Ridgeway, passing the Bronze Age Fort at Liddington Castle.

Though the weather was overcast, ramblers enjoyed an energetic walk on varied terrain from Oakridge, and the last walk in October, on a very windy day, passed from Bay Bridge to the Iron Age Fort at Barbury Castle and along the Ridgeway.

Most of the walks were well supported by groups averaging 20 or so, apart from one bad weather start and one when many were on holiday.

Many thanks to all our leaders and back-markers, to Rosemary and other photographers for the excellent records of these lovely walks.

Wendy Veitch, Programme Secretary (July to October)

Liaison Officer Report

I try to talk to people who I feel will be interested in what we do as a group such as:

- Watermoor Community Group
- Friends of City Bank,
- Gloucestershire Wildlife
- AQIVA.

There are some interesting ideas around walking, health and wildlife in the air at the moment with the G.C.C, C.D.C. and the Hare Festival people having funds and support in place to make walking and outdoor activities more mainstream. Should be an interesting time in 2015.

The retired Ramblers plus friends continue to meet once a month for lunch and sometimes a stroll. We vary our venues after much discussion and then descend upon some poor soul for a jovial lunch.

Our next lunch is on November 26th. at The Talbot in Victoria Road, Cirencester at 12ish. All are welcome to join us. We don't meet in December or January.

Our last outing was at AV8 at Cotswold Airport where there were 11of us.

Bill Irving, Liaison Officer

Website Report

At last year's AGM Collin West stepped down as webmaster but kindly agreed to carry on with the website until a new Webmaster could be found. The Group express their gratitude for his excellent work, in creating the Groups first website, and keeping it up to date ever since, with the weekly Walk Reports, and in addition, more recently, reports on Footpath Clearance and 40th Anniversary Events.

Collin continues to maintain his website until our new website is ready.

Collin's work is being taken over by: Alan Cook, creating and maintaining our new website (see description below); Mike Bailey, loading our walks programme and events onto The Ramblers Walk and Events Manager; and Pat Beckley, inputting our Walks and Events Reports into the new website.

New Website

Ramblers-Webs provided us with a starter website, to which we are adding our own content. Alison Goodall started the work, and then I continued it. Neither of us had any knowledge of website development and I am indebted to Chris Vaughan of Ramblers-Webs (and Derby and South Derbyshire Ramblers), for the help and assistance he has given me.

Ramblers-Webs are volunteers, whose costs are borne by Ramblers Central Office. They look after the computers where the websites are stored, and provide technical support. (It is used by about 80 other Groups and Areas).

Our new website is nearing completion and we are arranging for a smooth handover with Collin.

Alan Cook, Webmaster (Acting)

Membership Secretary's Report

Membership Numbers. On 30th September 2014 membership numbers were as follows:

Year	Life	Single	Joint	Single Concession	Joint Concession	Total	Average Over 12 months
2013	0	75	70	15	24	184	194
2014	0	81	72	17	18	188	188

* These numbers include those whose payments were pending.

We have attracted 25 new members during the period 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2014.

On 30th September Cirencester had 187 Active Members (fully paid) compared to 179 at the same time last year. Nationally numbers have remained broadly stable from 107,017 to 107,584 and in the Gloucestershire Area from 1622 to 1646 over the last 12 months.

I have included a chart at the end of this report which shows how the membership numbers have increased or decreased in Gloucestershire over the last few years.

Membership Subscriptions. There was a change to the subscription rates on 1st May 2014. The current rates are as follows: Individual Membership - £33.00 or £36 MDD; Joint Membership - £44.00 or £48 MDD; Individual Concessionary - £20.00 or £24 MDD; and Joint Concessionary - £26.50 or £30 MDD. These rates will remain valid until 30th March 2015. Tesco vouchers are still accepted as a method of payment for renewal of membership.

Distribution of Walk Programmes, Chairman's Newsletter and Area News. Currently 133 members (72%) receive the walks programme and area news by e-mail; and, if notified, any changes to the walks programme and other news. This is up on the numbers and percentage from last year.

Walks Leaflets and Posters. The group distributed some 1700 of our Walks Programme leaflets at various locations including Cotswold Outdoor, Gateway Centre, Bingham House, Tourist Information Centres at Cirencester, Malmesbury and Tetbury, and handed out to non members on walks. This included several Saturdays when the group ran a stall at the Cotswold Outdoor. Posters have also been made available for display at the various locations.

Ramblers Discounts. Cotswold Outdoor continues to offer a discount of 15% and sponsor the group for carrying their advert. Many other retail outlets offer the normal 10% discount to Ramblers, its always worth asking.

Emergency Contact Cards. Laminated emergency contact cards are still available from Mike Bailey for a small donation to cover the cost of materials.

Michael Bailey, Cirencester Ramblers Membership Secretary

This chart shows the trends (cumulative increase or decrease) in membership numbers (Active plus Payment Pending) since 30 September 2012 to 30th September 2014 for each Gloucestershire Group or grouping and the Gloucestershire Area. Key to Groups: GR01 – Cirencester, GR02 – Forest of Dean, GR03 – South Cotswold, GR04 – Gloucester, GR05 – Cleeve, GR06 – Mid Gloucestershire, GR07 – North Cotswold, GR50 – Gloucestershire Walking Group, GR96 – Gloucestershire Area Membership, and GR98 – Gloucestershire Non-Group Members.

